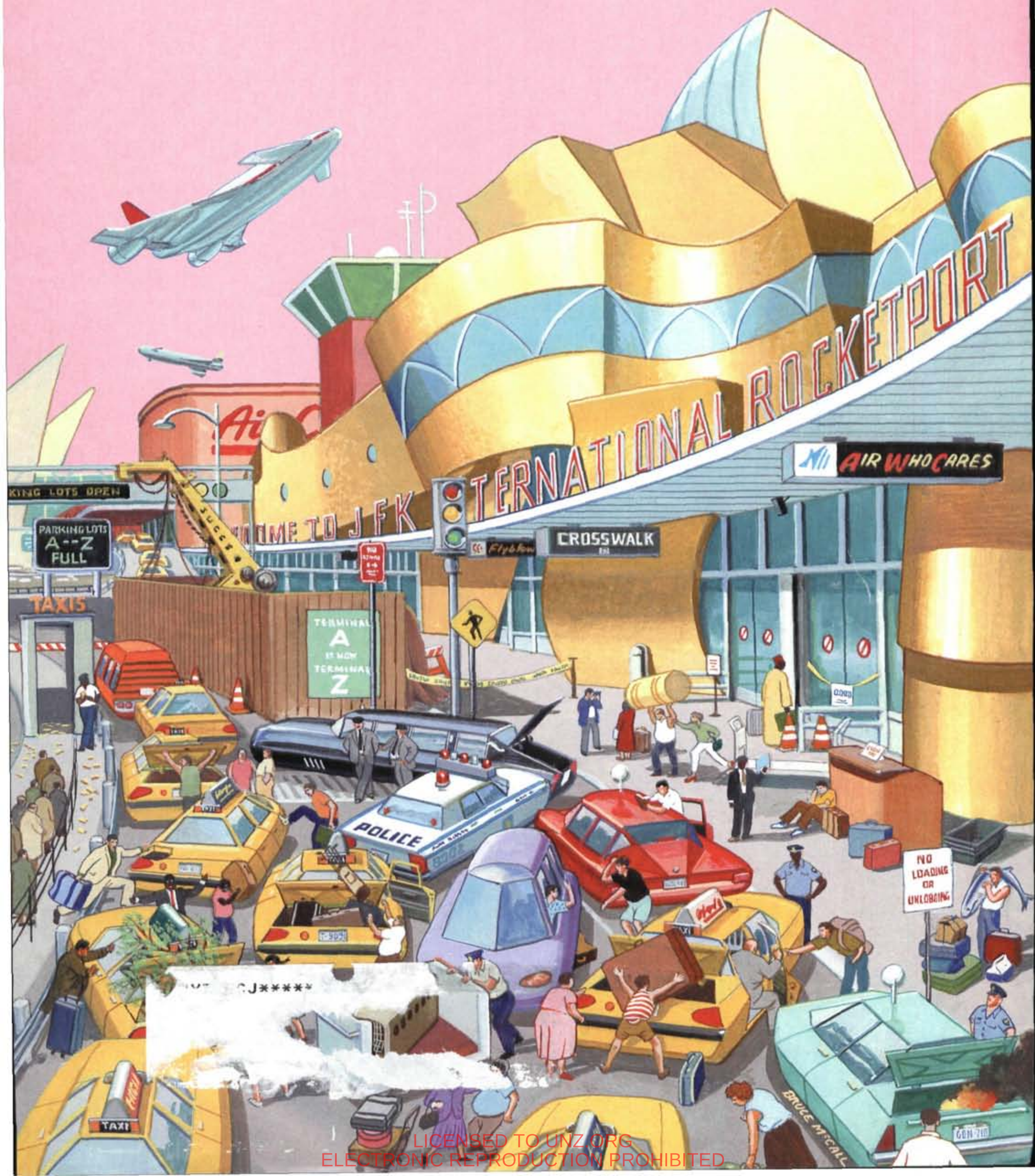
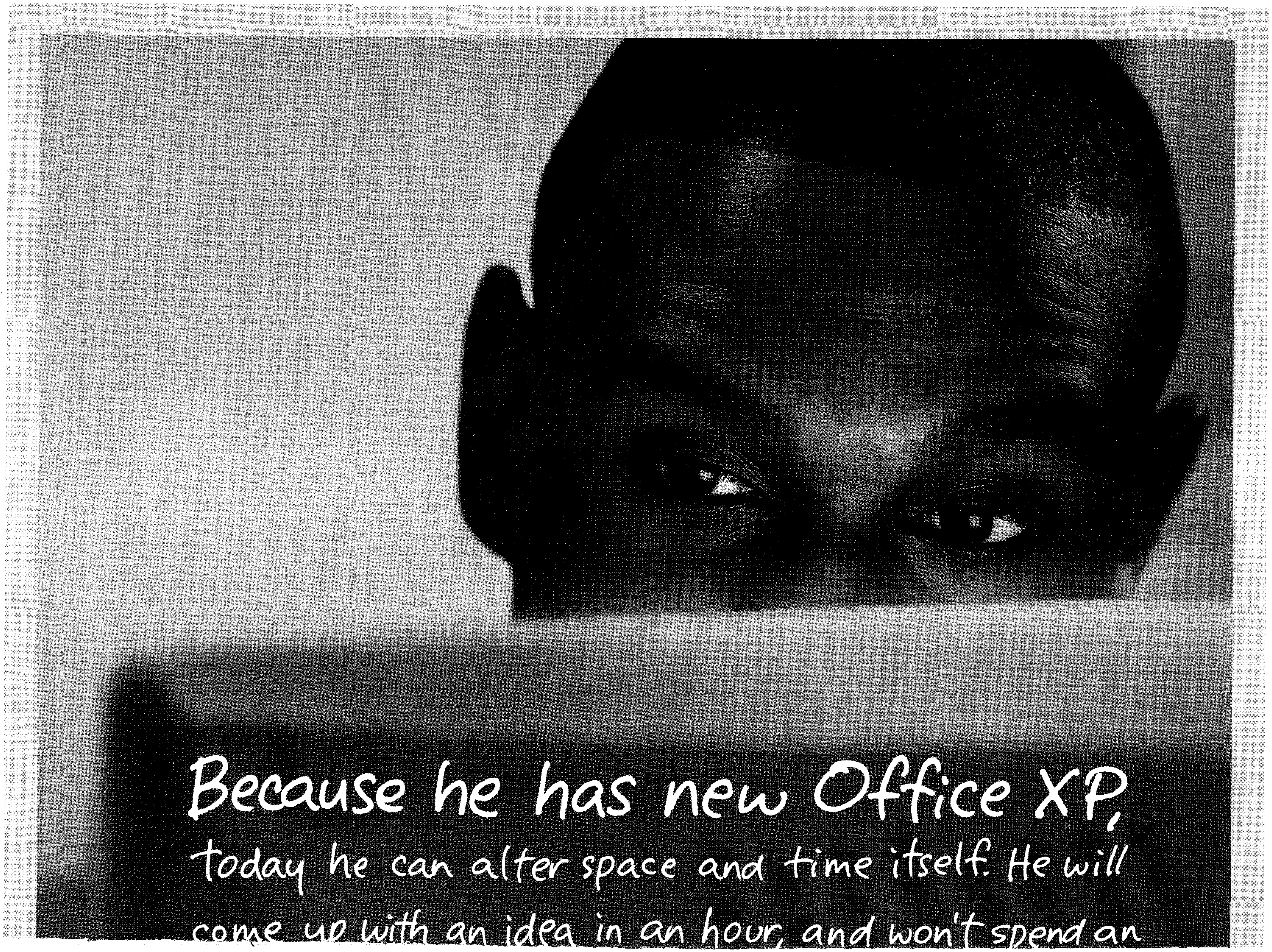
PRICE $3.50

JULY 2, 2001

THE NEW YORKER


KING LOTS OPEN
PARKING LOTS A--Z FULL
TAXIS
OME TO J F K
TERNATIONAL ROCKETPORT
AIR WHO CARES
CROSSWALK
TERMINAL A IS NOW TERMINAL Z
POLICE
NO LOADING OR UNLOADING
TAXI
BRUCE McCALL


Because he has new Office XP,
today he can alter space and time itself. He will
come up with an idea in an hour, and won't spend an

entire day making it into a presentation. He won't spend precious hours mining the menus for options, struggling with formatting or wandering through the server in search of files. Everything he needs is on the screen, next to his work. And as for space, if this idea doesn't merit a bigger office, nothing will.

Microsoft® Office XP, with time-saving Task Panes which present the tools you need that were previously hidden in the menus. Just one of many improvements in this, the new version of Microsoft Office.

You want it. You need it. Now you can get it.

Microsoft® Office xp

Experience it for yourself at microsoft.com/office

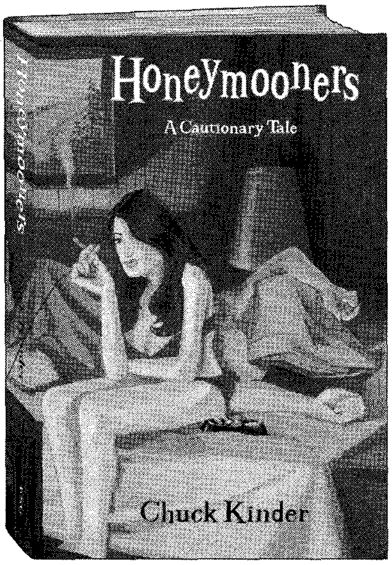
Microsoft®

© 2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft and the Office logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

HONEY-MOONERS

A Cautionary Tale

Chuck Kinder



"*Honeymooners* is, like a hangover, painful and shot through with stinging remorse; and yet the long, dark night of the soul it chronicles is so rich with tall tale, funny episodes, and unforgettable incident—as well as unexpected moments of genuine lyrical grace—that one finishes this mythic morning-after story feeling ready at once to sally forth, in the estimable company of Chuck Kinder, the mighty Sasquatch of American fiction, and do it all over again."
—MICHAEL CHABON

"Garishly funny . . . *Honeymooners* shines a dark light on our literary cellars and lower depths. Chuck Kinder's angle of attack is all his own."
—LARRY McMURTRY

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

THE NEW YORKER

JULY 2, 2001

6 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
21 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Season of traffic; the con man as press critic.

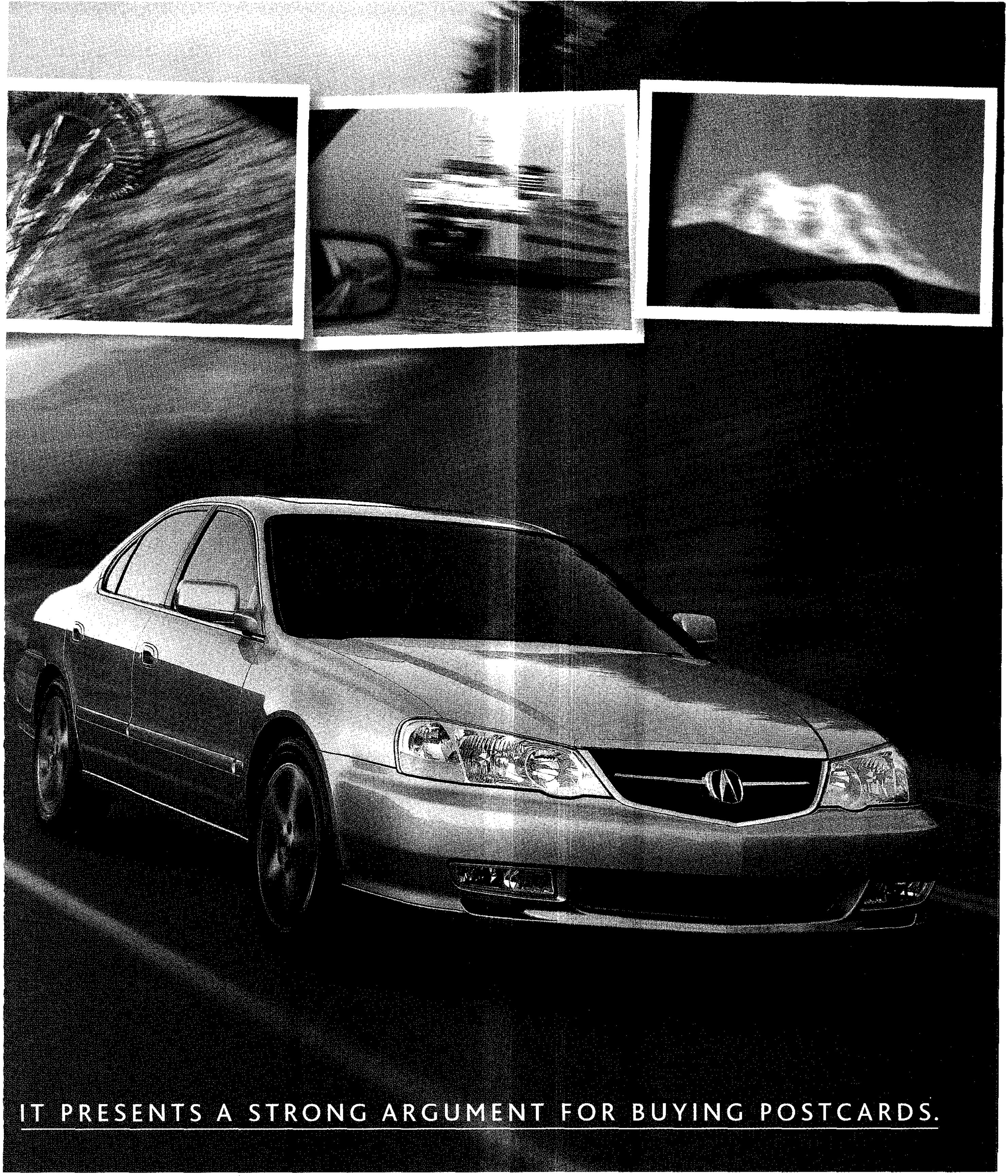
Nicholas Lemann 28 LETTER FROM WASHINGTON
Testing Limits
What can Bush really do for education?
Bruce McCall 35 SHOUTS & MURMURS
"Blitzkrieg!," the Movie
Susan Orlean 36 DEPT. OF DECORATION
The Illustrating Man
The fight for the right to tattoo.
Malcolm Gladwell 42 ANNALS OF PUBLIC HEALTH
The Mosquito Killer
When DDT was a gift from God.
Paula Fox 52 PERSONAL HISTORY
Whose Little Girl Are You?
Finding a home, from Cuba to Hollywood.
Rebecca Curtis 70 FICTION
"Hungry Self"

THE CRITICS
Paul Goldberger 76 THE SKY LINE
Mies van der Rohe and Robert Venturi.
BOOKS
Louis Menand 81 *The other deaf-and-blind girl.*
85 Briefly Noted
David Denby 86 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"A.I."

POEMS
Robin Robertson 33 "The Flamingos"
Robert Creeley 64 "The Heart"

COVER *"J.F.K. International Rocketport, 2025," by Bruce McCall* THE BACK PAGE *"Immortality for Achievers," by Tom Tomorrow* DRAWINGS *Mick Stevens, Victoria Roberts, Marisa Acocella, Larry Hat, Michael Maslin, George Booth, J.C. Duffy, Liza Donnelly, Gahan Wilson, Leo Cullum, Sam Gross, William Hamilton, Tom Cheney, Roz Chast, Bruce Eric Kaplan, David Sipress, Michael Crawford, Frank Cotham, C. Covert Darbyshire, Charles Barsotti, P.C. Vey*

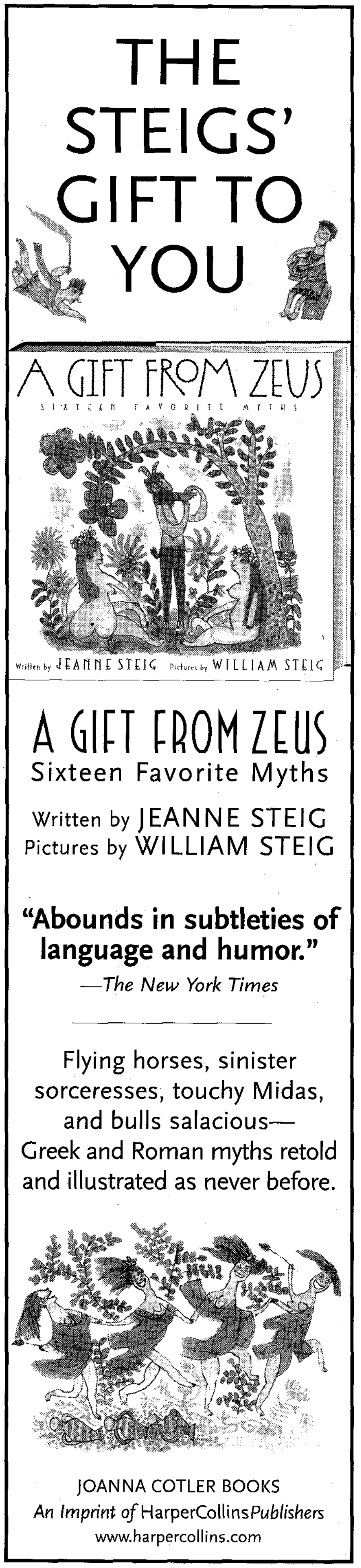
www.newyorker.com



Introducing the 260-hp Acura TL Type-S. Attention shutterbugs: A bristling 3.2-liter V-6 and landscape photography just don't mix. So, as you engage its 5-speed Sequential SportShift™ automatic transmission, kindly suggest to your snap-happy passengers that they just relax and enjoy some tunes on the stereo. And leave the pictures to tripod-wielding professionals. ACURA

©2001 Acura Division of American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Acura, TL and Sequential SportShift are trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. Make an intelligent decision. Fasten your seat belt. For more information, call 1-800-TO-ACURA or log on to acura.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


THE STEIGS' GIFT TO YOU

A GIFT FROM ZEUS
SIXTEEN FAVORITE MYTHS
Written by JEANNE STEIG Pictures by WILLIAM STEIG

A GIFT FROM ZEUS
Sixteen Favorite Myths
Written by JEANNE STEIG
Pictures by WILLIAM STEIG

"Abounds in subtleties of language and humor."
—*The New York Times*

Flying horses, sinister sorceresses, touchy Midas, and bulls salacious—Greek and Roman myths retold and illustrated as never before.

JOANNA COTLER BOOKS
An Imprint of HarperCollins*Publishers*
www.harpercollins.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Paula Fox ("Whose Little Girl Are You?," p. 52) has written six novels and twenty-three books for young people. Her memoir, "Borrowed Finery," will come out in the fall.

Paul Goldberger (The Sky Line, p. 76) is the magazine's architecture critic.

Susan Orlean ("The Illustrating Man," p. 36) recently published "The Bullfighter Checks Her Makeup," a collection of her articles.

Rebecca Curtis (Fiction, p. 70) lives in Syracuse, New York, and is finishing her first collection of stories.

Robert Creeley (Poem, p. 64) will publish a new collection, "Just in Time: Poems 1984-1994," in September.

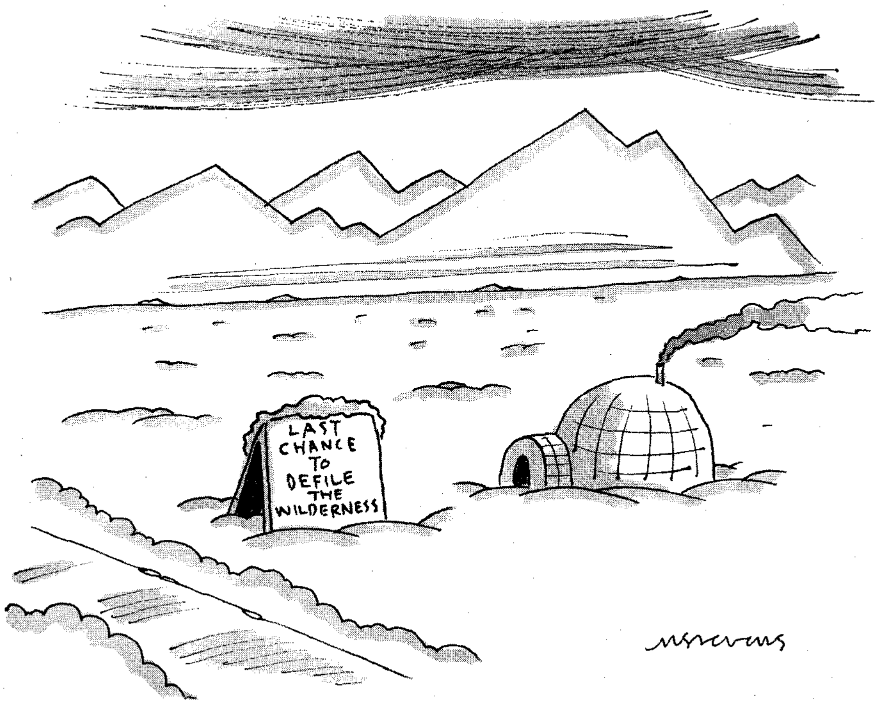
Bruce McCall (Cover; Shouts & Murmurs, p. 35) has a book about dream cars, "The Last Dreamorama," coming out in October.

Malcolm Gladwell ("The Mosquito Killer," p. 42) published "The Tipping Point" in March of 2000.

Nick Paumgarten (The Talk of the Town, p. 26) is an editor of The Talk of the Town.

Louis Menand (Comment, p. 21; Books, p. 81) has been contributing to the magazine since 1991. His new book, "The Metaphysical Club," came out in May.

Nicholas Lemann ("Testing Limits," p. 28) is the magazine's Washington correspondent. ♦


LAST CHANCE TO DEFILE THE WILDERNESS

THE NEW YORKER, 4 Times Square, N. Y., N.Y. 10036. David L. Kahn, publisher; John R. McCarus, associate publisher; Peter W. Jurew, associate publisher, marketing; Marie Wolpert, advertising manager; Joyce Castleberry, New York manager; Ronda Carnegie, sales development director; Peter Zuckerman, national sales manager; Susan Harrington, director of creative services; Theresa Gaffney, creative development director; Rosemary Stanton, advertising business director. For advertising inquiries, please call Marie Wolpert at (212) 286-5611. The New Yorker is not responsible for the return or loss of submissions, or for any damage or other injury to unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Any submission of a manuscript or artwork must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope of appropriate size, bearing adequate return postage. The magazine does not consider unsolicited photographs or transparencies. © 2001 by The Condé Nast Publications Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The periodical's name and logo, and the various titles and headings herein, are trademarks of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc., published through its division The Condé Nast Publications Inc. S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Steven T. Florio, president and C.E.O.; Charles H. Townsend, executive vice-president and C.O.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.F.O.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE: To inquire about a subscription or to change an address, please write to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, CO 80322-6447, telephone (800) 825-2510, E-mail to subscriptions@newyorker.com, or visit our Web site at www.newyorker.com. To purchase a back issue telephone (800) 753-7276. Outside North America, call (303) 678-0354. For a change of address, subscribers should give four weeks' notice. If possible, please send the address label from a recent issue. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at Box 56447, Boulder, CO 80322-6447.

THE MAIL

THE F.B.I. AND THE SAUDIS

Elsa Walsh's article on Louis Freeh, the outgoing F.B.I. director, suggests that Freeh believed he was frustrated by the Clinton Administration in his attempt to solve the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, which killed nineteen Americans ("Louis Freeh's Last Case," May 14th). As the national-security adviser at the time, I strongly disagree. From the day of that tragic bombing, President Clinton and his national-security team repeatedly and firmly pressed the Saudis for disclosure of all information and for full coöperation with the F.B.I. At no point during this period did Freeh ever tell me that he was not satisfied with the coöperation he received from the Administration.

It now seems clear that the Saudis were misrepresenting the Administration's position to the F.B.I. as an excuse for the uncontested fact that they sat on critical information for two years. They were, in effect, playing one arm of our government against another. The families of the Khobar victims have endured years of pain. They deserve the truth, and not more shell games from America's allies.

Samuel R. Berger
Washington, D.C.

TOKEN GESTURES

Peter Schjeldahl's otherwise fine article on the emerging new generation of talented African-American artists unfairly characterized Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden as artists who "managed token status with grace" (The Art World, June 11th). These two artists could never objectively be regarded as tokens. Lawrence's "Migration" series is a major work that stands as a compelling record of a pivotal social event. Bearden produced brilliant social realism and figurative abstractions, and was arguably one of the world's great collagists. They were technical masters, rarely equalled by contemporaries of any color. Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison also worked during a period when African-American writers and artists were seldom household names. How many literary critics today would regard them as tokens?

Arnold Henderson, Jr.
Marblehead, Mass.

SPEAKING FOR THE SIXTIES

Louis Menand questions whether the nineteen-sixties were "shaped by the baby-boom generation" ("The Seventies Show," May 28th) and notes that Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, and other leaders were not boomers. (He might have added Bob Dylan.) But he is right only to a point. I helped "shape" the sixties when I refused to go to Vietnam and protested the war—and so did countless others. Our most visible spokesmen may have been pre-boomers, but we—in our political, cultural, and life-style choices—gave those years their content and substance.

Robert Cohen
Brighton, Mass.

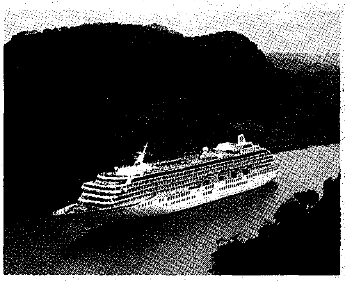
AVOIDING DOOMSDAY

Michael Specter is right to be alarmed at how easy it would be to bring down the Internet ("The Doomsday Click," May 28th). But it doesn't have to be that way. Computers could be made much more secure than they now are; for example, users should be able to make only limited portions of memory accessible to programs imported from the Net. There is no reason that systems cannot be designed this way, other than that they haven't been in the past. The computer industry tends to build on its mistakes instead of correcting them. It made a false start with regard to security and, whatever the cost, needs to begin again.

John G. Fletcher
Livermore, Calif.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.



If Only All Shortcuts Could Be This Wondrous.

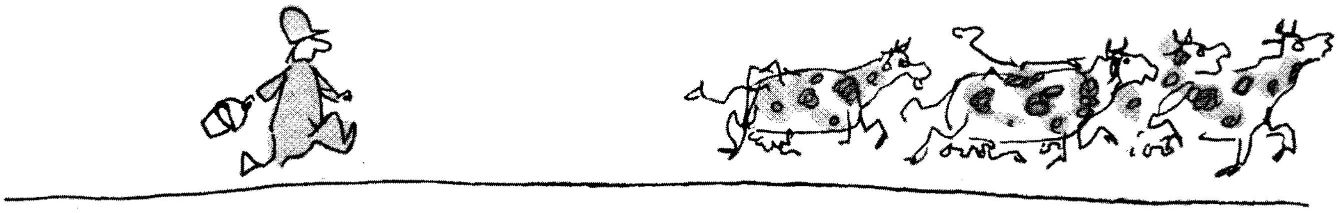
In the fall and winter of 2001, Crystal Cruises offers journeys through the magnificent pathway between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea: the Panama Canal. You will enjoy special theme cruises, including our *Crystal Wine & Food Festival,* and unique onboard programs like *Computer University@Sea.* Sail with Crystal Cruises and see why, in readers' polls, we've been voted "World's Best Large Cruise Line" by *Travel + Leisure* and "Best Large-Ship Cruise Line" by *Condé Nast Traveler.* Call your travel agent or contact us at 1-800-820-6663 for a free Panama Canal brochure. Visit us at www.crystalcruises.com.

It's a wonderful world.

CRYSTAL CRUISES®

©2001 Crystal Cruises/Bahamian Registry

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



GEORGE BOOTH, 10/30/78 (DETAIL)

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

BLUE
Phylicia Rashad is the star of a new comedy by Charles Randolph-Wright, with music by Nona Hendryx. Two previews on June 27. Opens June 28 at 7. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

BLUE WINDOW
A revival of Craig Lucas's 1984 play, set at the Sunday-night dinner party of a group of friends living in New York. Marin Hinkle leads the cast. Previews begin July 2. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 206-1515.)

DOWN SOUTH
The Rattlestick Theatre takes aim at the Cuban-missile crisis, with a comedy by Doug Field. Previews on June 27. Opens June 28 at 8. (224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 239-6200.)

FOUR
A Worth Street Theatre staging of a drama by Christopher Shinn, which follows the relationships of a quartet of linked characters on a single day. Jeff Cohen is the director. In previews through June 30. Opens July 1 at 5. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 206-1515.)

A LIFE
Fritz Weaver portrays an Irish civil servant nearing the end of his life, in Hugh Leonard's 1981 play. Preview on June 27. Opens June 28 at 8. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

MAJOR BARBARA
Cherry Jones has the title role in a Roundabout Theatre Company production of Shaw's play. Daniel Sullivan is the director. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
The Aquila Theatre company's version of Shakespeare's comedy, set in London in the sixties. Previews begin June 28. (45 Bleecker Street Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 529-4530.)

MUSIC FROM A SPARKLING PLANET
A new comedy by Douglas Carter Beane ("As Bees in Honey Drown"). In previews. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

ONCE AROUND THE CITY
Mark Linn-Baker is the director of a new musical comedy, about Manhattan life during the booming eighties. With music by Robert Reale and book and lyrics by Willie Reale. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

QUARTETT
Heiner Müller's 1980 drama, which he based on "Les Liaisons Dangereuses," stars Daniel McDonald, Chandler Vinton, Omar Metwally, and Suzanne Packer. Six performances only: June 27-29 at 8, June 30 at 2 and 8, and July 1 at 3. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			27	28	29	30
1	2	3				

WHERE'S MY MONEY?
A new comedy by John Patrick Shanley, about two Brooklyn divorce lawyers. In previews. (Center Stage/NY, 48 W. 21st St. 905-0593.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL
A kind of "My Fair Bat Boy," in which a half-bat, half-man—memorably played by Deven May—emerges from his childhood cave into adult bourgeois life. But the musical world he enters is one of darkness, not light, of ironies, not idealism, where plot is a history of abdications and song extolls the emptiness of all the standard credos—Christianity, family, community, love, redemption—and of the musical itself. It's a jejune vision, but a smart, playful, and funny one nonetheless. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/9/01.) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

BLAST!
A musical extravaganza, which evolved from the drum-and-bugle corps Star of Indiana. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

THE BREAKOUT
The 1969 play by OyamO (a.k.a. Charles F. Gordon), about two black men trying to find freedom. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-0051. Closes June 30.)

BREATH, BOOM
From Kia Corthron, a play tracing fourteen years in the life of a female gang leader. Marion McClinton is the director. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes July 1.)

BYRD'S BOY
Bruce J. Robinson's drama about a homeless man who believes he's the son of Admiral Byrd. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes July 1.)

CHAUCER IN ROME
The latest play by John Guare, set in Italy during the final year of the last millennium. Nicholas Martin is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

A CLASS ACT
Ed Kleban's life following his success as the lyricist of "A Chorus Line" is the basis of this musical. With songs by Mr. Kleban and a book by Linda Kline and Lonny Price. Mr. Price is the director. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

THE DOG PROBLEM
David Rabe's new play, set in New York's Little Italy, deals with a canine, for sure. But the dog's a good one, a symbol of love and loyalty, and it's the Mafia that represents the cruel forces that can separate modern man from the things he holds dearest. The play has just about everything—an absolutely terrific cast (especially Larry Clarke, as the dog's owner, and David Wike, as a Mafia wannabe), fine direction, by Scott Ellis, and a smart, funny, and somehow enigmatically tender script. What it doesn't have is a satisfying ending, but it's so entertaining until then that it hardly matters. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes July 1.)

ELI'S COMIN'
The late Laura Nyro's witty, passionate songs first came to public attention in 1968. This cycle of twenty of them manages, with music only, to tell the tale of a woman's life in the city—a tale of fun, temptation, loss, and redemption—without a false note (in any sense). The terrific Judy Kuhn leads the cast. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303. Closes July 14.)

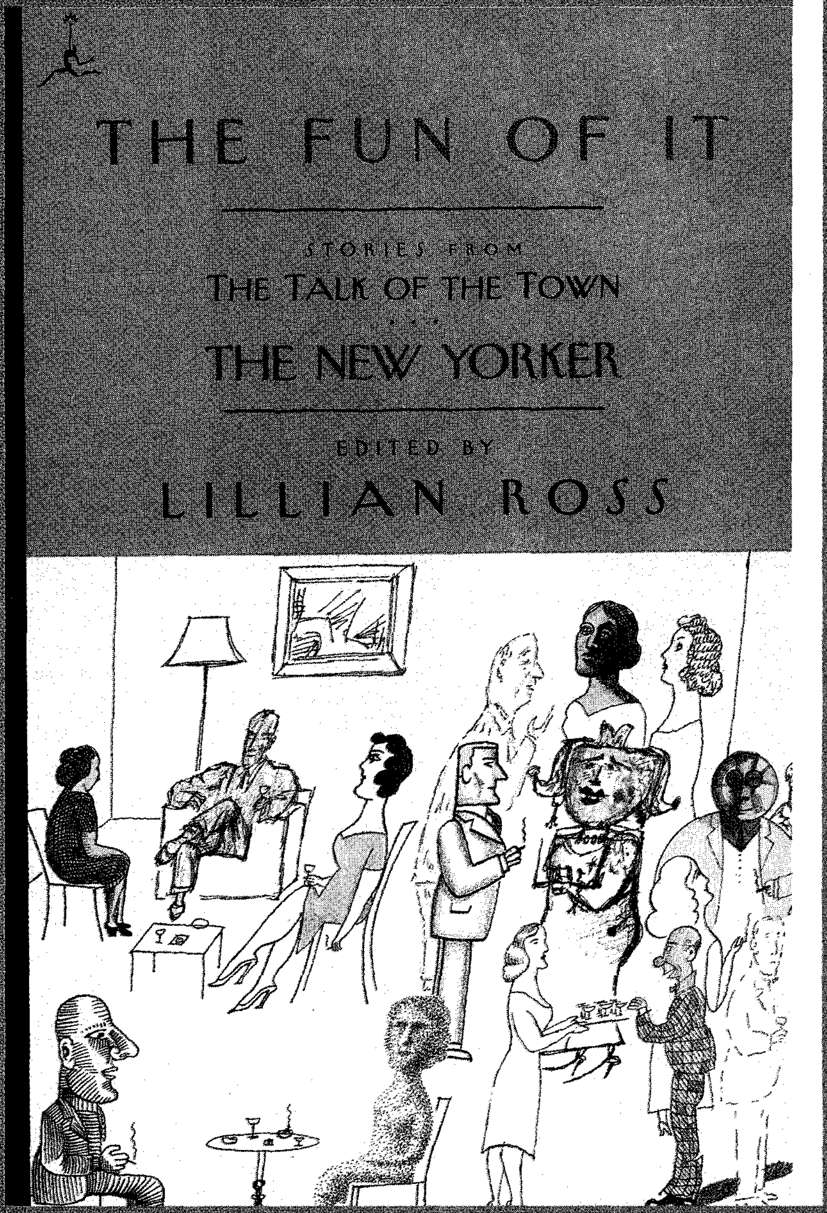
EVERYTHING THE TRAFFIC WILL ALLOW: THE SONGS AND SASS OF ETHEL MERMAN
A cabaret tribute to the late singer, starring Klea Blackhurst. (Upstairs at Jack Rose, 771 Eighth Ave., at 47th St. 206-1515.)

FOLLIES
This revival of Stephen Sondheim and James Goldman's landmark 1971 musical, which takes place at a reunion of Ziegfeld-like performers, is less lavish than the original production, but no matter: the show's real grandeur lies in its imaginative structure and the unfolding of its lyrically rich, resonant songs. In the hands of Matthew Warchus, who directed, the relentless, unblinking intelligence is intact. (4/23 & 30/01) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

FORTY-SECOND STREET
As a domineering diva who breaks her ankle before the big opening night, the wonderful Christine Ebersole steals the show in this revival of the 1980 tap musical based on the 1933 film. But it has to be said: it was probably easy to do. If this sort of show is your cup of tea, the songs are wonderful and the dancing is fine—just know that the cup is not quite full. (Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

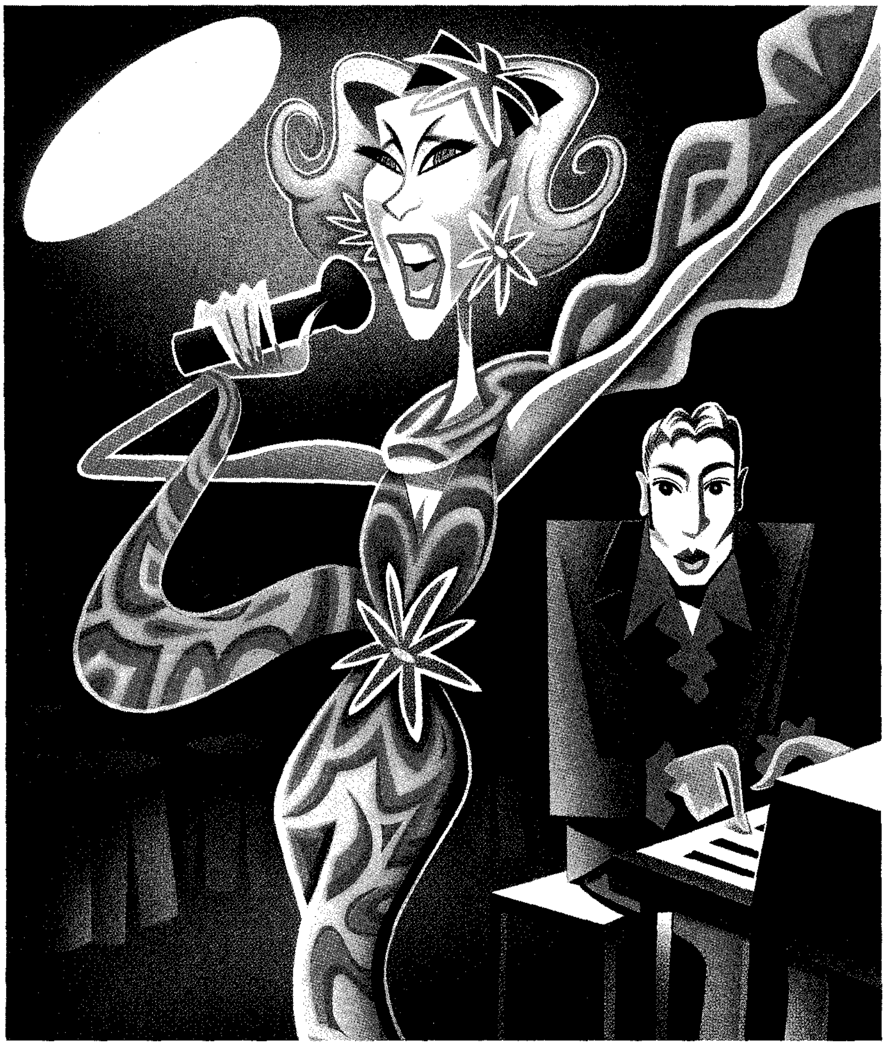
FREE MARKET
Eight short plays about the workplace—by Jim Grimsley, Julie Jensen, Sachi Oyama, OyamO,

E. B. White visiting a potter's field. A. J. Liebling on a book tour with Albert Camus. John Updike navigating the passageways of midtown. Jacqueline Onassis chatting with Cornell Capa. Ian Frazier at the Monster Truck and Mud Bog Fall Nationals. Mark Singer with sixth graders adopting Hudson River striped bass.


THE FUN OF IT
STORIES FROM
THE TALK OF THE TOWN
THE NEW YORKER
EDITED BY
LILLIAN ROSS

The first anthology of Talk of the Town stories, edited by Lillian Ross, a writer of Talk stories for more than forty-five years.

RANDOM HOUSE



Kiki & Herb, a.k.a. Justin Bond and Kenny Mellman, in their latest cabaret comedy.

Guillermo Reyes, Elaine Romero, Karen Sunde, and William Wise—staged as a single play by the Working Theatre. (Urban Stages, 259 W. 30th St. 279-4200. Closes July 1.)

GEORGE GERSHWIN ALONE
A one-man portrait with music, written and performed by Hershey Felder and directed by Joel Zwick. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

GLIMMER, GLIMMER AND SHINE
The newest installment of Warren Leight's jazz reverie (he wrote the Broadway hit "Side Man"), in which the cool world and the straight world collide. Jordan Shine (Scott Cohen), the trombone-playing protégé of the trumpeter Marty Glimmer (the superb John Spencer), reveals that at a wedding gig in Greenwich, Connecticut, he met and fell for one of the guests, a pert marketing executive called Delia (Seana Kofoed), who turns out to be Marty's niece—the daughter of his estranged twin brother and former partner in a jazz combo. After the group fell apart, Marty stuck to jazz's romantic, druggy, penurious, crooked ways, while his brother renounced music and became a successful textile manufacturer. On this sketchy coincidence hangs Leight's slim, clichéd tale of possible reconciliation. Luckily, Leight loves Marty, and he contrives to let the wisecracking old wastrel rip at one point, leaving behind the constraints of the formulaic plot for a verbal solo, which Spencer, with his gruff tones, elevates to a kind of ontological cool. (6/4/01) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes July 8.)

I LOVE AMERICA
A one-woman show about Dominicans seeking refuge in the United States, written and performed by Lidia Ramirez. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

INTERNATIONAL HISPANIC THEATRE FESTIVAL
Five troupes from Miami's annual festival—representing Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Spain—present a play each during the two-week engagement. In Spanish, with English surtitles. (Duke Theatre, 229 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes June 30.)

IN THE PENAL COLONY
Philip Glass's new musical, based on the Kafka story. JoAnne Akalaitis is the director. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

THE INVENTION OF LOVE
Tom Stoppard's witty, challenging account of the classicist and poet A. E. Housman and the love that not only dared not speak its name but didn't even have one until 1895 (when the word "homosexual" was coined). Jack O'Brien's well-directed, lucid production features some fine acting, especially by Richard Easton as the elder/dead Housman and Robert Sean Leonard as the young classicist in love. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes June 30.)

I SING!
A musical comedy about postgraduate life in New York City, by Eli Bolin, Sam Forman, and Benjamin Salka. (Maverick, 307 W. 26th St. 239-6200.)

JEAN COCTEAU REP
The company wraps up its thirtieth season with "Sus," Barrie Keeffe's drama about police brutality against blacks in Margaret Thatcher's London. Woodie King, Jr., is the director. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060. Closes June 30.)

KIKI & HERB: STOP, DROP & ROLL
The drag duo otherwise known as Justin Bond and Kenny Mellman, in their latest show. (Fez, 380 Lafayette St. 533-2680.)

KING HEDLEY II
August Wilson's new play, set in Pittsburgh in 1985, is a tale of rage, redemption, and Reaganomics. Its eponymous protagonist, played by Brian Stokes Mitchell, is eager to start anew after emerging from a long prison term for killing a man, but hard times and his own self-destructive ways seem to conspire against him. Despite some good performances by Viola Davis, Stephen McKinley Henderson, and Charles Brown, the play lacks psychological credibility, and its heavy cargo of symbolism and coincidence often makes it feel like a soap opera. Directed by Marion McClinton. (5/14/01) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. Closes July 1.)

LOBBY HERO
In another era, the contrivances of Kenneth Lonergan's new play would have been called hokum. But because Lonergan is the writer and director of the moving and successful film "You Can Count on Me" and the author of the acclaimed plays "This Is Our Youth" and "The Waverly Gallery" the public is expecting him to aim high. He does, and misses. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

LOVE, JANIS
A musical play about Janis Joplin, built around her songs, writings, and interviews. Though it contains no new insight, it's a useful corrective to the drunken, drug-addicted legend, and the production is a fine one. Randal Myler directed with a sure eye for the telling detail, and the seven-member band really cooks. (Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

MEASURE FOR MEASURE
Billy Crudup leads the cast in the New York Shakespeare Festival's first outdoor production of the season. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750. Closes June 28.)

NEW WORK
A work in progress from the Wooster Group, based on Paul Schmidt's translation of Racine's "Phèdre." (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes July 1.)

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST
Dale Wasserman's severely dated adaptation of Ken Kesey's 1962 novel—a broad allegory, set in a mental hospital, about the perils of nonconformity—is a quaint relic, but as staged by Chicago's excellent Steppenwolf Theatre it's a well-acted one. Gary Sinise leads the cast, as the incorrigible mental patient Randle P. McMurphy. Terry Kinney is the director. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY
In Edward Albee's new play, an older couple provide a harsh taste of what life has in store for a young couple with a new baby: the ravages of adulthood, the tidal wave of troubles and injuries that come with time. Brian Murray and Marian Seldes, two veterans who are rarely less than riveting, make the most of Albee's sharp, enigmatic writing; their highly stylized, virtuosic performances here are stunning. David Esbjornson directed. (2/19 & 26/01) (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THE PRODUCERS
High-camp heaven from Mel Brooks, who wrote the music and the lyrics for this monster-hit version of his 1968 movie—in which two scoundrels try to bilk their investors by staging a surefire failure, entitled "Springtime for Hitler." The performing centerpiece of the show is Nathan Lane, as the flamboyant huckster Bialystock; his kind of high-amperage panache is in limited supply these days, and both he and the excellent Matthew Broderick, as the hapless accountant Leo Bloom, deliver the mail. Expertly staged by Susan Stroman. (5/7/01) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

SO LONG AGO I CAN'T REMEMBER: A DIVINE COMEDY
The latest multimedia production by the troupe Gale Gates et al. takes its inspiration from Dante. (37 Main St., Brooklyn. 718-522-4597. Closes June 30.)

STONES IN HIS POCKETS
Marie Jones's play is set in an Irish village where a big-budget Hollywood movie is being made. Conleth Hill and Seán Campion play two extras in the movie and all thirteen other characters as well, including the movie's female star, its director, and various locals. Though the play has its clever ways when

ROBERT RISKO

it comes to sending up both Hollywood and Irish mores, the stories told here aren't anything you haven't seen before. (4/16/01) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

TICK, TICK . . . BOOM!
An autobiographical musical by the late Jonathan Larson ("Rent"). (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

UNCLE BOB
In a new play by Austin Pendleton, George Morfogen portrays a man dying of AIDS and Joseph Gordon-Levitt his homophobic nephew. (Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

THE WOMAN
Alex Roe directs a revival of the 1911 thriller by William C. De Mille (brother of Cecil B.). (Metropolitan Playhouse, 220 E. 4th St. 995-5302. Closes June 30.)

THE WOMAN IN BLACK
Stephen Mallatratt's ghost-story thriller, taken from the novel by Susan Hill. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

WORLD OF MIRTH
A clown turns against his colleagues in a financially strapped carnival, in a drama by Murphy Guyer. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

THE DINNER PARTY
Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

FOSSE
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.

KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

THE MUSIC MAN
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.

PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW
Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.

THE SYRINGA TREE
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.

THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.

TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
Final performances of the season. June 26-29 at 8, June 30 at 2 and 8, and July 1 at 3: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

CISNE NEGRO
The São Paulo-based contemporary-dance company offers four works by as many choreographers: "Danses Concertantes," by Mark Baldwin, "In Case of . . .," by Dany Bittencourt, "Earth Apples," by Itzik Galili, and "Trama," by Rui Morieira. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. June 26-29 at 8 and June 30 at 2 and 8.)

"FREE THE ANGELS"
The choreographer Nicholas Leichter and his seven-member company present a two-part première, set to songs by Stevie Wonder, which traces the connections between sexuality and spirituality. The evening also includes "Black American Psycho," "Undertow," and "Worth," set to the music of Mary J. Blige, Björk, and Erykah Badu, respectively. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. June 28-July 1 at 8.)

"RIVERDANCE—ON BROADWAY"
Not the Lord of the Dance with his shirt off and the leather truss. The other one. (Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. 307-4100. June 27 and June 30 at 2 and 8; June 28-29 and July 3 at 8; and July 1 at 3. Through Aug. 26.)

"WOMEN DANCEMAKERS"
As part of Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center's twenty-fifth-anniversary season, entitled "Dancing on Silver," Andrea E. Woods curates a program of works by five women choreographers: Hope Boykin, Marlene Myrtil, Melissa Wynn, Judith Sanchez, and Cheng-Chieh Yu. (Long Island University Triangle Theatre, Flatbush Ave. at DeKalb Ave., Brooklyn. 718-875-9710. June 29-30 at 8.)

TABLES FOR TWO

TIBETAN YAK
72-20 Roosevelt Ave., Jackson Heights (718-779-1119)—Radical simplicity is the latest trend among Manhattan's top new chefs, but at this humble Queens establishment it comes naturally. Not much grows at Himalayan altitudes, so ingredients are limited (barley stands in for wheat; garlic, ginger, and chili peppers flavor most everything). And Buddhist teachings are also at work (for purposes of spirit economy, it's better to kill one really big animal than many little ones).

The first thing the waitress brings to the table is cups of *bocha*, a salty, buttered black tea. It quickly splits tables of neophytes for and against—thinking of it as soup helps. It's the *tsel thang*, a plain broth with spinach, however, that really sets the tone for everything to come—strong, simple flavors. Yak is too expensive to import, so there's a lot of beef on the menu. Like all the meat dishes, the chunks of marinated beef tongue are subtle, not smothered in an overpowering sauce. Even the Indian-influenced lamb curry—with lots of star anise—and a terrific pork chili only flirt with fire. But robust vegetarian entrées get top billing. *Tsel thinthuk* is a big bowl of broth with spinach, radish, and scraggly handmade pasta which could put chicken soup out of business. Potatoes with spinach are slightly undercooked, so their flavor is strong and pure.

A couple of the dishes will strike some diners as plain strange. The *la phing* salad, for example, a disk of cold bean jelly, absurdly spicy, comes across as a prank. And the desserts seem to have been improvised in a hurry by someone who'd never heard of dessert. (Turns out they really are ancient Tibetan treats.) Short tubes of pasta rolled in sugar, barley, and grated cheese seem to have been invented to serve to Italian explorers. The other dessert may have been designed for an infant—plain yogurt, rice, golden raisins, and butter—and, indeed, a recent toddler diner found it quite enticing.

Along with a well-groomed, nonplussed-looking yak, the eight auspicious symbols of Tibetan Buddhism are painted on the walls, and the place seems to need the good luck. It serves a steady stream of Tibetan and Nepali families and a slowly growing cult following, but the delicious, rough-hewn food has somehow been overlooked by the city's culinary adventurers. (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Entrées $7-$11.)

—*Owen Phillips*

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL
June 27-29 at 8, June 30 at 2 and 8, and July 2 at 2: Twyla Tharp Dance. ♦ June 28-29 at 8:15, June 30 at 2:15 and 8:15, and July 2 at 5: "Dances by Very Young Choreographers." When Ellen Robbins started teaching choreography, in the early seventies, Twyla Tharp and her peers were referred to as "young" choreographers, both to distinguish them from their elders Cunningham and Graham and because they were. Robbins calls her current students, who range in age from six to eighteen, "*very* young" choreographers. In all her classes, at every grade level, she teaches that "you make choreography by doing: you create problems and then you work them out." The problem she gives the five-year-olds, for example, is to make a dance to Mozart's variations on "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," which "has a beginning and an ending, and a good time in between." The six-year-olds choreograph solos to a Poulenc ditty. Hannah Dunn says her fun, jumpy "Follow Me!" is inspired by the music—"It sounds like a playground," the six-year-old says with authority—and is based on personal experience. "In the dance, I tell the kids to follow me," she explains. "And I go inside and I play hide-and-seek and hopscotch." (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING
Dancing under the stars returns to Lincoln Center. June 27: The classic fifties-era R. & B. vocalist **Ben E. King.** ♦ June 28: **Un Trajé Nuevo,** led by the Cuban vocalist Sergio Marciano Pereda, and **Ozomatli,** an eleven-piece band from Los Angeles, team up for a night of *Son*, merengue, and salsa. ♦ June 29: **Eddie Blazonczyk's Versatones** have been performing polka music since the days of the Kennedy Administration. The **Tim Gillis Band** is a popular local country-and-Western outfit. ♦ June 30: The **Pablo Mainetti** quintet leads the tango. ♦ July 3: Boston's **White Heat Swing Orchestra** revisits the music of Glenn Miller, George Gershwin, and Cole Porter. (Fountain Plaza. 875-5766. Dancing starts at 8; lessons are offered at 6:30.)

GREEN DAY
Largely to blame for the housebreaking of punk rock, this San Francisco trio of (no longer) youngsters made a big splash in the mid-nineties by putting a more user-friendly spin on the poppy punk formula of the Ramones, Dickies, and Buzzcocks. Where their forefathers languished in relatively impoverished obscurity, however, Green Day became megaselling MTV staples. More recently, the group's thunder has been usurped by a new generation of by-the-numbers upstarts such as Blink 182 and Sum 41. Spiky green hair has never seemed tamer. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. June 27 at 8.)

JVC JAZZ FESTIVAL
The annual gathering of jazz stars winds up with a host of A-list shows, including the festival's most promising double bill, on June 28, which unites the **Wayne Shorter** quartet—featuring the luminous saxophonist in an acoustic mode—and the similarly unplugged **Chick Corea New Trio.** The cool vocalizing of **Diana Krall** follows the next night. The R. & B. diva **Gladys Knight** concludes the festival on June 30. (All shows at Carnegie Hall at 8. For more information, call 501-1390. See also the Bowery Ballroom and Birdland.)

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

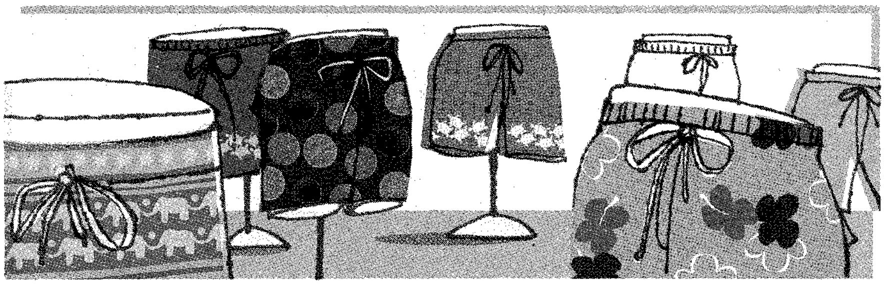
Hot Couture

One afternoon about thirty years ago, a bored gentleman sitting at a café in Saint-Tropez thought it would be fun to cut up the checkered tablecloth and make himself a pair of swim trunks. Happy with the aesthetic results but uncertain about the fabric, he started playing around with other materials, including the quick-drying stuff used for sails. And that's how, according to promotional materials, **VILEBREQUIN** started its line of boxer bathing suits, a collection of playfully designed, cotton-lined trunks that appear to be intended for a customer who is halfway between Moondoggie and Alain Delon. "We had the fun idea to match the flowers and the sun!" explains the Gallic saleswoman in the SoHo store (436 West Broadway; 431-0673), describing one of the many fabrics that have replaced tablecloth and sailcloth. This season other patterns include gambolling pachyderms on a pink background and turtles crawling through hibiscus ($109).

The worried visages in Saks Fifth Avenue's vast women's swimwear department (611 Fifth Ave.; 753-4000) offer silent testimony to the travails associated with suit shopping—the dread of the fitting room's three-way mirror, the spectre of untanned flesh glistening under unsparing lights. The *Times* recently commented on the ascent of the bikini over other bathing costumes, and Saks has plenty of scanty suggestions for the courageous shopper. A minuscule striped Missoni two-piece covered with transparent paillettes ($190) is clearly meant for lolling, not dunking, since it's offered with the admonition "Please avoid use in swimming-pool as the chlorine can damage this article." A scarf-printed trifle by Jean Paul Gaultier is, if anything, even skimpier; though it's made of polyester, it's scarcely hardier. (Its care label reads: "It is advisable to take the article to a specialized dry cleaners.") Those desirous of trailing more than a toe in the tarn might prefer a Lilly Pulitzer, the riotously printed Palm Beach numbers suited not just for the Atlantic but for the washing machine. A seagull's-eye view of pools and palm trees rendered in turquoise and lime enlivens not only swimsuits but an accompanying halter sundress ($145). For shoppers requiring still more reassurance, Saks sells something called the Miraclesuit, which has a tag promising that the wearer will "look 10 lbs lighter in 10 seconds." It is available in regulation black and in a surprisingly jaunty pink-and-white gingham check. If even the prospect of a miracle is insufficiently comforting, the store has, adjacent to the swimsuits, a coat department brimming with balmacaans and trenches that hint at more forgiving days to come.

Cristina Gitti, the designer for **MALATESTA** (115 Grand St.; 343-9399), a two-month-old shop on one of the last ungentrified stretches in SoHo, made her name with hand-blocked sarongs imported from India and packaged in matching oblong pouches. The boutique, a serene oasis a few doors down from an auto-repair shop and a down-at-the-heels pizza parlor, offers a plethora of pareos, or Polynesian hip wraps, among them a tangerine cotton affair enhanced with a smattering of maroon glass beads ($53). The other merchandise ranges from flat silver perforated-leather sandals to the veil-thin Indian overshirts known as kurtas to a basketful of velveteen espadrilles from Italy, not India, which are inspired by the slippers gondoliers wear ($62).

—*Lynn Yaeger*



EDEL RODRIGUEZ

DIDO
A melancholy sample last year on the potty-minded rapper Eminem's hit single "Stan" catapulted this surnameless British songbird into stardom. Dido has since capitalized on the opportunity with some winsome hit singles of her own. With the emotive Scottish rockers **Travis.** (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. June 27 at 8.)

DEPECHE MODE
After the lead singer Dave Gahan had a well-documented spell of heroin-fuelled depravity which landed him in rehab, the stalwart synth-tweakers Depeche Mode are back with a new album. "Exciter" updates their tuneful, miserable pop for the benefit of a dwindling nation of black-clad goth diehards. Despite a brief flirtation with guitars, the band's music is still peppered with the electronic histrionics that make teen-age wallflowers swoon. (Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. June 27-28 at 8.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE
The free outdoor music series. June 28 at 7:30: The "Remembering Shakti" concert brings together the guitarist **John McLaughlin** and a host of Indian musicians to explore unamplified fusion music. The original, mid-seventies Shakti came before the world-music boom; this updated ensemble combines meditative flow and virtuosic expanse in a pleasing balance. ♦ July 1 at 3: The **Cowboy Junkies, Natalie MacMaster,** and **Sarah Harmer** celebrate Canada Day. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 360-2777.)

COLDPLAY
Following in a long line of bands from the Smiths to Oasis, Coldplay is yet another British next big thing out to redraw the lines on the great pop map. Ditching extraneous gimmicks and garb, they perform earnest, straightforward songs with a nod to the late American rocker Jeff Buckley. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. June 28 at 8.)

"THE JAMMY AWARDS"
This annual awards show, now in its second year, celebrates accomplishment in a genre not noted for its structure. Inspired by the Grateful Dead, jam bands perform long, improvisational, and loosely organized movements. This evening mixes performances by the Derek Trucks Band with contributions from Junior Brown, Les Claypool, the Tom Tom Club, Del McCoury, Soulive, Stanley Jordan, the Disco Biscuits, Steve Kimock, Talib Kweli, and the Jazz Mandolin Project. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. June 28 at 8.)

BEAT THE DONKEY
The Brazilian percussionist Cyro Baptista stirs up a storm with his spellbinding, booty-moving ten-piece ensemble. An Arts at St. Ann's production. (Brooklyn Children's Museum, Brooklyn Ave. at St. Mark's Ave., Brooklyn. 718-735-4400. June 29 at 6:30.)

STYX / BAD COMPANY
Like a mighty cockroach, the much maligned genre of arena rock has survived the nuclear assaults of punk, disco, hip-hop, alternative, and grunge and kept on rocking like the seventies never ended. Despite enormous indifference on the part of the public, both Styx and Bad Company are touring, although in somewhat reduced circumstances (in Styx's case, without lead singer Dennis DeYoung, and in Bad Company's case, without as much hair). Expect needless theatrics and more gratuitous solos than you can wave a lighter at. With the formerly missing-in-action rocker Billy Squier adding yet more middle-of-the-road fare, portly guys in fading satin tour jackets will really have something to high-five about. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 1 at 6.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—June 28: The award-winning slick bluegrass pickings of the **Del McCoury Band.** July 1: The **Wild Magnolias,** a troupe of Mardi Gras Indians led by the gravel-voiced Bo (Big Chief)

Dollis. The group takes the stage in sparkling headdresses and whips up some of the funkiest music on this continent. July 2-3: **Dickey Betts,** the longtime Allman Brothers guitarist and singer, fires up his band.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—June 26-27: The **North Mississippi Allstars** stop by, courtesy of the JVC Jazz Festival. Led by Luther and Cody Dickinson, sons of the legendary producer and musician Jim Dickinson, this trio will be performing songs from its new record, "The Word," a collection of gospel instrumentals, featuring the keyboardist John Medeski and the pedal-steel player Robert Randolph, both of whom may join the show here.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—July 2: The young lead singer of **Antony and the Johnsons Orchestra** has a sweet and haunting voice reminiscent of Brian Ferry and a theatrical, pansexual stage presence that recalls early Marc Bolan.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—June 28: **Andrew Bird's Bowl of Fire.** The classically trained violinist Bird, a frequent collaborator with the Squirrel Nut Zippers, stops by with his acoustic quartet, which mixes folk, rock, lieder, and New Orleans jazz, all bound together with Bird's agile wit.

LUNA LOUNGE
171 Ludlow St. (260-2323)—June 30: **Crazy Mary** is an energetic local band right out of the great garage tradition. They are independent rockers in the best sense; the members have day jobs that insure that, no matter how few albums they sell, no matter how obscure their labors are, their rock careers will continue as long as they are willing. Like most of the garage bands of old, they aren't very refined, but it is rock and roll after all.

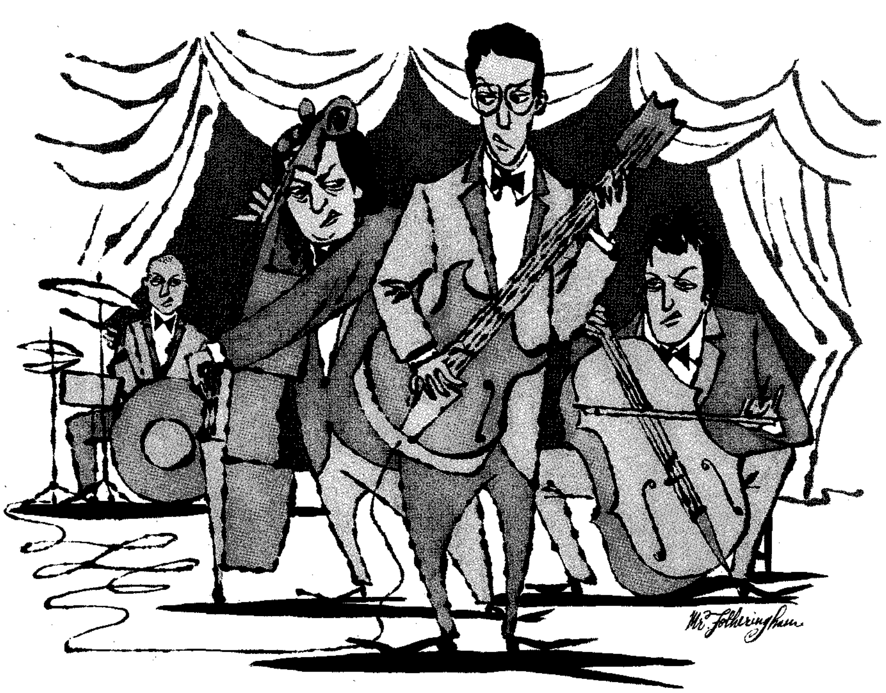
MAXWELL'S
1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—July 1: Originally just a lighthearted dalliance for Tina Weymouth and Chris Franz, the married rhythm section of the Talking Heads, the **Tom Tom Club** is now their sole concern, though the music remains as carefree as ever. In the same spirit as their one big single, 1981's "Genius of Love," with its quirky rhythm and simple hook (which would later surface, strangely enough, on a Mariah Carey song), the Tom Tom Club continues to experiment without letting the proceedings get too complicated. With the Irving, Texas, native **David Garza,** a mind-blowingly inventive singer-songwriter.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—June 27: **David Garza** (see Maxwell's). June 29: If Hank Williams had been born in Israel, had come of age in the post-punk era, and had hung out with the art-school crowd, he might have turned out a bit like Eef Barzelay, the lanky front man of the quartet **Clem Snide,** which is celebrating the release of its new album, "The Ghost of Fashion." Barzelay's front-porch ballads and lilting, whimsical waltzes are haunted by images of Dairy Queens and bus trips into the unknown, and the band, with its earthy emphasis on cello and upright bass, gives them just the right amount of hopeful melancholy. June 30: **The Walkmen.** A few of the downtown aesthetes who brought the world Jonathan Fire*eater have banded together again. Led by Hamilton Leithauser, whose Robert Plant-like plaintive growl balances the velveteen lushness of the organist Walter Martin, the group produces a sound that has at once an enigmatic, funereal quality and a pop shimmer.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
130 W. 3rd St. (777-7745)—June 26-27: **Me'Shell Ndegeocello.** A critic's darling initially, the soulful funkstress saved herself from becoming the Terence Trent D'Arby of her era by recording a high-profile duet cover of Van Morrison's "Wild Night" with John Mellencamp. Not just another righteous soul diva, Ndegeocello is a wildly versatile and accomplished musician who sings with blood-boiling passion. And she plays a decidedly funky bass guitar with as much authority. June 28: **Walter (Wolfman) Washington.** June 29: The daydream-inducing, meticulously textured music of **Ladybug Transistor.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ARCI'S PLACE
450 Park Ave. S., between 30th and 31st Sts. (532-4370)—June 26-July 7: The veteran Broadway vocalist **Darius de Haas** offers his take on the songs of Billy Strayhorn. Back in the spring, de Haas's performance of his Strayhorn favorites was one of the highlights of Lincoln Center's "American Songbook" concert series. This night-club engagement offers those of you who missed his uptown show the opportunity to hear a slightly truncated, but no less promising, program.



Clem Snide, celebrating the release of "The Ghost of Fashion," at the Mercury Lounge.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—June 29: Birthday boy **Dewey Redman** turns seventy, and among those giving this paragon of improvising a celebratory shout-out are fellow-saxophonists **Sonny Fortune** and **Joe Lovano,** the trumpeter **Tom Harrell,** and the percussionist **Ray Barretto.** June 30: The influential guitar stylist **Pat Martino** returns to his roots with an organ trio featuring **Joey DeFrancesco.** Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through July 1: It's too bad that Dizzy Gillespie missed the recent Cuban-music explosion; as one of the first American bandleaders to fully embrace Latin rhythms back in the forties, he laid the groundwork for it all to happen. The **Dizzy Gillespie Alumni All-Star Big Band** honors the great man's pioneering internationalist leanings as well as the bebop lingua franca he helped develop.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Once again this summer, the pianist **Peter Mintun** is in charge at the Bemelmans Bar. A genuine throwback to a gentler time, this elegant performer specializes in curios from the twenties and thirties like "Kitten on the Keys," but he has also been known to play cartoon theme songs if the mood (or the crowd) warrants it. Agreeable and reassuring without being overgracious, he's sort of a curio himself.

IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through July 1: The peerless jazz pianist **Tommy Flanagan** settles in with his trio. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—July 1 and Sundays throughout the month: The **Howard Fishman** quartet. Led by the guitarist and singer Fishman, a Connecticut native who spent his musically formative years in New Orleans, this quartet, featuring the violinist Russell Farhang along with a trumpeter and bassist, mixes swing and old-time folk music into an entirely new cocktail. During this residency the band has been delving into the dark and poignant songs of "We Are Destroyed," a theatrical piece about the Donner-party tragedy written by Fishman.

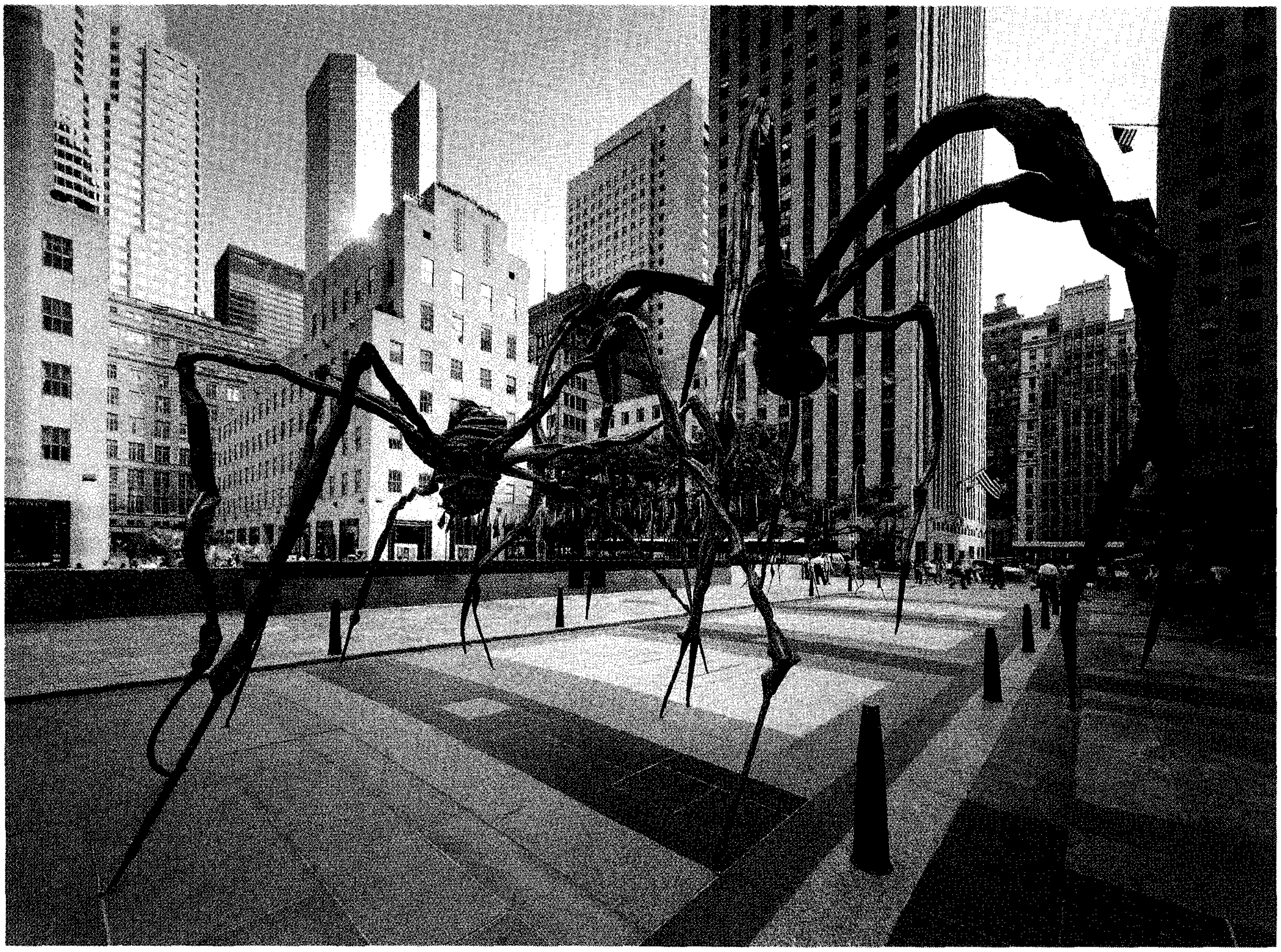
TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—June 29: The **Jane Ira Bloom** quartet. A formidable improviser with a full-blooded tone that sets her apart from the lightweight and/or Coltrane-obsessed soprano-sax players clogging the airwaves, Bloom has been even more adventurous recently, testing herself against edgier players and succeeding admirably.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through July 1: The **Lewis Nash** septet. Nash can lift a band clear off the stage with drum work that is the very essence of clean, modern swing. He's what all young bop drummers should aspire to be. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Summer Selections: American Landscape Drawings and Watercolors."** Nearly fifty summer landscapes and seascapes—all works on paper by American artists—are tucked away in the cozy mezzanine galleries of the American Wing. Maurice Prendergast conveys the simple pleasures of a seaside stroll in a jaunty watercolor of nineteenth-century day-trippers. On a darker note, Thomas Cole's fastidious drawing "The Wounded Indian Slaking His Death-Thirst" pits the eternity of nature against the fragility of life, as massive boulders and contorted trees dwarf the tiny stooping figure. Frequent visitors to the museum will get a kick out of Frederick Arthur Bridgman's studies of the Temple of Dendur, portrayed against a view of Egypt as opposed to the familiar one of Central Park. Through Sept. 2. ♦ In summertime the museum's roof is transformed into Met Hampton (a bikini-free zone). This year, the sun worshippers and singles who mob the roof on weekend evenings share their turf with five large sculptures by Joel Shapiro. Three are cast in bronze, two in aluminum. Of these, one is



Louise Bourgeois's arachnid trio unites two works, both called "Spider," with the thirty-four-foot "Maman" at Rockefeller Plaza.

ROBERT POLIDORI

painted fire-engine red and the other cobalt blue. All five employ a similar formal strategy: square and rectangular bars are joined together at apparently haphazard angles. The arrangements have a Constructivist flavor and, in the case of the colored sculptures, invite an anthropomorphic reading, with the bars legible as arms, trunks, and legs. But the most ambitious piece, which is twenty-four feet high and looks gravitationally impossible, resembles a tumbling game of pickup sticks. Through late fall. ♦ With a consort of star-struck press and film clips and more than eighty original outfits, **"Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years"** reminds viewers of the almost brash propriety of the "Jackie look." Through July 29. ♦ **"Beyond the Easel: Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis, and Roussel, 1890-1930."** Through Sept. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Mies in Berlin"** focusses on projects that the glass-and-steel architect took on in the early stages of his career (1905-38), when Ludwig Mies van der Rohe left his native Germany for the United States. Through Sept. 11. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—At Frank Gehry's first retrospective at the Whitney, in 1986, undulant titanium roofs and wriggling walls were nowhere in sight. The Los Angeles-based architect seemed a quirky regional figure, fond of unorthodox materials (cardboard, chain-link fencing) and given to chopping projects into multiple room-sized buildings. Nobody could have predicted that he would soon be the world's most sought-after and publicized architect. This new, profoundly exhilarating show tracks Gehry's path to Bilbao, and offers working models of current projects in Scotland, Germany, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. It's too much to absorb in a single visit, but even a quick walk-through will leave visitors delighted, buoyed, amazed—and a little nostalgic for the plumb-line architecture that Gehry's fluid, crumpling planes seem poised to supplant. Through Aug. 26. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—**"Wayne Thiebaud: A Paintings Retrospective"** gathers more than a hundred paintings, watercolors, and pastels by the eighty-year-old artist whose luscious still-lifes of pies, cakes, hot dogs, and sundaes suggested associations with the Pop-art movement when he began exhibiting in the sixties. But his real skills proved to be in his use of paint and light, not Warholian irony, and the show presents many mouthwatering examples of further inventiveness, from his figure studies to his paintings of the Sacramento Valley and the dizzying San Francisco streetscape. Opens June 28. ♦ **"Mies in America,"** the larger of the companion exhibitions on the onetime Bauhaus director, shows how the architect's work evolved after his arrival here in 1938, from European avant-gardism to an increasingly space-age take on American practicality. Through Sept. 23. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—**"The Genomic Revolution"** is as stagy as the museum's permanent wildlife dioramas and as wired as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Throughout the dark, labyrinthine exhibit, sound bites from scientists and Everymen overlap with a soundtrack of doubt-fostering minor-key hums and beeps. The tone tends toward boosterish enthusiasm for progress, with an occasional raised eyebrow; pronouncements like "Our perception of medicine and ourselves is forever changed" are spoken within hearing range of explanations of why it might be unwise to clone Rex or Muffin. (For one thing, a calico cat with the same genes would be unlikely to have the same pattern of spots.) Touch-screen surveys tabulate visitor responses to hot-topic questions, and the museumgoers prove much more enthusiastic about genetic technologies than respondents in a recent national sample—at last count, thirty per cent of the visitors would replicate a person. Through Jan. 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Leon Golub, the dour dean of political painters, is the subject of a new retrospective, covering almost fifty years of art work. Like many careers, Golub's is U-shaped: the earliest and the most recent paintings are alike in their resolutely grim surrealism. In between, though, there are two marvellous periods. The first comes in the mid-sixties, with paintings like "Gigantomachy II," which depicts a Donnybrook among titanic combatants. The second, marked by paintings of death squads and torturers, elevated Golub's reputation in the eighties. Still-jolting pictures such as "White Squad IV (El Salvador)" show bad guys at work—and remind us whose team we're on. Through Aug. 19. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

GROLIER CLUB

47 E. 60th St. (838-6690)—**"The Grolier Club Voyages: A Smithsonian Libraries Exhibition."** When John Smithson died, in 1829, he'd never seen America. Nevertheless, the British amateur scientist willed his estate to the United States "to found, at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an Establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge." His whim has grown into the world's largest museum complex, which is well represented by this selection from its library. The displays focus on ex-

ploration and science, from Ptolemy's "Liber Geographiae" to a pop-up Buck Rogers slaying a dragon on the moon. The show includes travel accessories, such as a tiny knife-spoon-fork-and-spice-jar set in a leather case, and souvenirs, including a few tropical birds who lie flat, specimen-style, wings folded and toes tagged. Through Aug. 4. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

JOSÉ BEDIA
The Cuban expatriate's new canvases seem to have been inspired by the maritime excitement of Westermann's "Death Ships" or perhaps by the publicity for "Pearl Harbor." They feature enormous battleships and aircraft carriers, most of them listing, capsized, or in flames. The most spectacular image, though, is exceptionally calm: a colossal tanker drifts toward us, its deck illuminated by a glowing beacon in the shape of a human figure. Around the perimeter, tiny sailors sit, peering into the surrounding blackness. It's an eerie, pulse-dampening image, much more than just a metaphor for Cuba's isolation. Through June 29. (George Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.)

LOUISE BOURGEOIS
How do you follow Jeff Koons's blooming puppy dog in Rockefeller Plaza? Bourgeois counters last summer's vision of majestic adorableness with a trio of toweringly sinister daddy longlegs—they look like they escaped from a 1950 Japanese horror film. The largest is a spindly thirty-four feet tall, with coursing, craggy bronze sinews: standing under the duomo of her eight legs, you can look up and up at the surrounding skyscrapers, which seem closer—just a few steps away!—and so easy to clamber up and conquer. Through Sept. 4.

JOHN DUFF
With their coarse, splintery surfaces, Duff's early fibreglass sculptures epitomized the back-to-nature spirit of post-minimalism and the shaggy decade that reared it, the seventies. Seen today, Duff's pieces point backward to Hesse and Wilmarth and forward to Serra's "Torqued Ellipse." Though critics at the time claimed that there was "nothing decorative or romantic" about Duff's works, it's easy to wonder whether their artfully casual surfaces aren't a little too ingratiating—a way of enlivening some fairly modest forms. Through June 29. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550.)

JEAN FAUTRIER
For those who first learned of Fautrier (1898-1964) through his imposing late abstractions, these small, softly sketched nudes, rendered in calligraphically weaving lines, may come as a pleasant surprise. Their ample, rolling, yawning, kneeling, sprawling, and sleeping forms seem to have risen as if they'd been kneaded, like the deeply fingerprinted bronze that accompanies them, "Femme Debout." Through July 6. (Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 988-1623.)

JIMMY WRIGHT
Wright's sunflowers are often nearly unrecognizable: swaying on crooked stalks, their giant seed heads sprout lanceolate twists that could be solar flares. Others look aquatic: seaweedy tangles drift across canvas or paper, mixing suggestions of Odilon Redon with Wright's own distinctively agile draftsmanship. The result is a kind of passionately unkempt flower painting: not exactly unsentimental, but full of a writhing, macabre lushness that might remind viewers of Theodore Roethke's descriptions of root cellars. Through July 12. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111.)

"HOMAGE TO THE SQUARE"
This mini-blockbuster of ninety-some representations of Washington Square made between 1890 and 1965 is clearly modelled on larger-scale museum productions, and, like them, it must balance the urge to be comprehensive with the need to be selective. Many of the images have not aged well, which can turn the show into a lavishly illustrated time line. A few minor works from big names like Thomas Hart Benton and Edward Hopper deliver marquee-grabbing power, and Jesse Tarbox Beals's vintage prints of the deserted arch remind us of its quiet power. Through July 6. (Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. 744-2300.)

Short List

VIJA CELMINS
McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 688-5951.
Through June 29.

TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK
James Cohan, 41 W. 57th St. 755-7171.
Through July 28.

ALEX KATZ
Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 861-7338.
Through July 13.

ALEXANDER LIBERMAN
Ameringer Howard, 41 E. 57th St. 935-1110.
Through Aug. 17.

ANNE PERETZ
Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606.
Through June 29.

WAYNE THIEBAUD
Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 987-4997. Through July 12.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

PHILIP AKKERMAN
For twenty years, the quixotic Dutchman has painted nothing but his own snub-nosed, gimlet-eyed, modestly handsome face. The results are far less repetitive than one might expect—sometimes, one feels, not repetitive enough: Akkerman morphs from bowl-cut schoolboy to hirsute burgher, from limp-haired rocker to modernist homunculus. The protean vamping is fun—a sort of oil-on-Masonite answer to Cindy Sherman—but the best pictures are often the leanest, where Akkerman limns his features with silvery, numismatic clarity. Through June 30. (Gorney, Bravin, and Lee, 534 W. 26th St. 352-8372.)

STEPHEN DEAN
The subject of Dean's début show is color, in both its Dionysian and Apollonian incarnations. In the former category, there's a murky, riotous video shot in India during the festival of Holi, when revellers carouse in the streets, dousing each other with dye: it's spring break for the color crazies. In the adjacent gallery, radiant pilasters have been created from stacks of cheap paperbacks—the kind with page edges colored red, yellow, orange, or green. The effect is as orderly and unassailably lovely as a pack of Life Savers. Through June 29. (Urbach, 526 W. 26th St. 627-0974.)

CHUCK NANNEY
Nanney's work delights in being all the things that art probably shouldn't be—frivolous, flip, easy to do yourself at home now that you've seen some examples—and the result is as glumness-dispelling as cotton candy. Nanney builds his wry, precarious sculptural assemblages out of pushpins, cocktail swords, and Flexi-straws. Some hang from the ceiling; others sit atop Brancusian pedestals made from cardboard. Depending on your viewpoint, Nanney's work is either a sneaky kind of flyweight post-minimalism or simply a tribute to the mood-altering possibilities of ninety-nine-cent stores. Through June 30. (Debs, 525 W. 26th St. 643-2070.)

Short List

JACQUELINE BOOTIER
Lombard Fried, 531 W. 26th St. 967-8040.
Through July 27.

RALPH FASANELLA
ACA, 529 W. 20th St. 206-8080.
Through July 7.

JULIO GALAN
Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 366-4774.
Through June 30.

KEN LUM
Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.
Through June 30.

JASON MEADOWS
Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 414-4144.
Through July 6.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

BRAD KAHLHAMER
This Native American artist dares us to say that he paints like a drunken Indian. At a glance, his lurching Southwestern landscapes, overlaid with scrawled phrases and images, look like identity shtick. But Kahlhamer's iconography, especially in these latest canvases and drawings, is ever more inventive and genuine, and the strange, fierce landscape they invoke, with its pigtailed bald eagles, towers of amplifiers, and viral invasions of smiley faces, feels at once unfamiliar and reckless. Through June 30. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.)

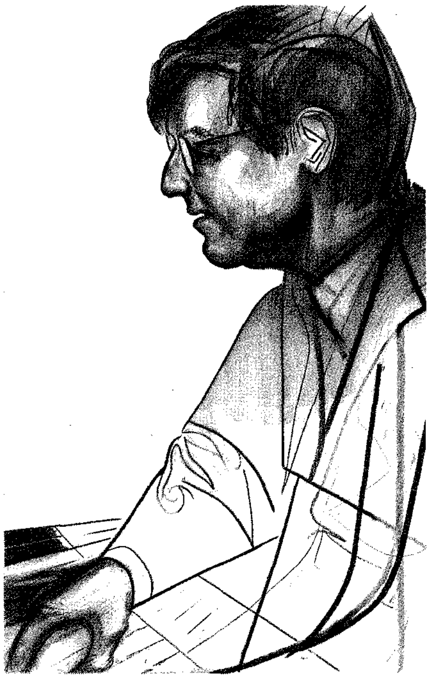
Short List

PHILIPPE BRADSHAW
Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.
Through June 30.

TEUN HOCKS
P. P. O. W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642.
Through Aug. 10.

RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN
Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through July 20.

WALLACE WHITNEY
Canada, 359 Broadway. 925-4631.
Through July 28.



Peter Serkin plays music by Haydn and Schoenberg at Tanglewood on July 2.

DAVID TOMB

PHOTOGRAPHY

NIKLAS NITSCHKE
Though Nitschke was educated in Munich and Dusseldorf, many of his images are stamped with New York; the intersection of Bleecker, Barrow, and Seventh Avenue South, with its signs for Mitali West and a Lemongrass Grill, appears over and over, superimposed on images of local pedestrians. His boosters at the gallery believe this collaging heralds the beginning of a "Post-Andreas Gursky Age," but it looks more like the same old noodling around with digital manipulation which photographers were doing long before Mr. Gursky brought the technique focus. Through July 7. (Von Lintel & Nusser, 555 W. 25th St. 242-0599.)

AARON ROSE
In his previous life as a commercial photographer, Rose collaborated with his clients; now, as an art

photographer, he does what he pleases, most often creating long pinhole exposures on home-built cameras. He prints with the same independence, claiming to have tried "iron, mercury, gold, tin, nickel, vanadium, cobalt, uranium, and a good number of the other metallic elements in the periodic table." The resulting cityscapes, with their Etch A Sketch skylines and floating patches of sunny rooftop, and his direct shots of the sun through clouds, which look more like the moon in a silent film, reward the work, and the viewer's close inspection. Through July 6. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 563-4474.)

CÉLINE VAN BALEN / CARLA VAN DE PUTTELAAR
These two young photographers attended Amsterdam's Rietveld Academy together, and their delicate color images of women have much in common, including close cropping and a contrarian sensibility. Van Balen's portraits of Amsterdam's young Muslim girls, which might easily have been reminders of the limitations of life behind the veil, seem warm and hopeful, while van de Puttelaar's smooth young nudes and partially clothed figures are ominously shadowy and flawed in blue-white against black. Through July 6. (Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 627-2410.)

"OVERNIGHT TO MANY CITIES"
This show—subtitled, with a flourish, "Travel and Tourism at Home and Away"—is, appropriately, all over the map. Portraits hang with landscapes, eight-by-ten-inch vintage prints shrink from radiant Ektacolor, and Larry Clark rubs up against Walker Evans. With sixty-eight works competing frenetically for attention, none hold it very long, though some quieter images do shine: Mike Disfarmer's little-seen portraits, two beautiful Joanne Mulberg light studies, and a Bill Ravanesi diptych in particular. Through July 13. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (860-1777)—Sebastião Salgado's "Migrations: Humanity in Transition." Open through Sept. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

MARIANA COOK
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. 744-7400. Through Aug. 10.

KATHERINE TURCZAN
Gallery 24, at 552 W. 24th St. 414-0370. Through July 20.

"LET'S HAVE LUNCH"
Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through July 13.

"MAGNUM: A COMMUNITY OF THOUGHT"
Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through Aug. 4.

"AU NATUREL: FEMALE NUDES 1920-1950"
DeLellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through Aug. 10.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

"MET IN THE PARKS"
In its second week, the thirty-fifth annual summer festival expands its range into the tristate area. All performances are free, and no tickets are necessary. For directions and other information, call 362-6000. "Tosca," with Georgina Lukács, Francisco Casanova, and James Morris; Julius Rudel conducts. (New Haven Green, New Haven, Conn. June 27 at 8.) ♦ With Hugh Smith replacing Casanova. (Brookdale Park, Montclair, N.J. June 30 at 8.) ♦ With Aprile Millo, Casanova, and Morris. (Marine Park, Brooklyn. July 3 at 8.) ♦ "La Traviata," with Sondra Radvanovsky, Jonathan Welch, and Kim Josephson; Maurizio Barbacini. (Pelham Bay Park, the Bronx. June 20 at 8. ♦ Cunningham Park, Queens. July 2 at 8.)

NEW YORK GRAND OPERA COMPANY
After eight years of effort, Vincent La Selva, the company's music director, will complete his chronological cycle of all twenty-eight of Verdi's operas with two final performances this summer. First is a new, fully staged production of **"Aida,"** directed by James Lucas, complete with chorus, belly dancers, and a corps de ballet. Michelle Capalbo is the Ethiopian slave-princess, Marisa Galvany is Amneris, Chris Owens takes the role of Radames, and Raemond Martin is Amonasro. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. June 27 at 7:30. No tickets necessary. The rain date is July 2.)

OPERA NOVA
Like many of the small-scale operatic outfits that struggle to survive in the city's cultural mix, Opera Nova likes to make up for its size by taking weird angles on the classics. This summer it presents **"Lucy, Vampire of Lammermoor,"** a staging of Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" performed as a nineteen-thirties horror movie (Count Dracula replaces the character of Enrico, Lucia's brother). The singers include Ilya Speranza, William Olson, and Campbell Bridges, singing an English libretto by Robert Turner; Lorene Phillips conducts a two-keyboard arrangement of the score. (Producer's Club Crowne Theatre, 358 W. 44th St. June 26-30 at 7:30 and July 1 at 3. For more information, call 252-2418.)

OPERA FESTIVAL OF NEW JERSEY
The state's largest opera company presents **Turandot,** Puccini's final opera, in a full staging by John Hoomes. The cast includes the Ukrainian soprano Anna Shafajinskaia, making her U.S. début, in the title role (which she has sung at the Welsh National Opera and will sing at Covent Garden), Allan Glassman as Calaf, Theresa Cincione as Liù, and Scott Altman as Timur; Michael Ching conducts. (McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J. 609-258-2787. June 30 at 8; the production runs through July 26.)

CHORUSES

CHOIR OF BELFAST CATHEDRAL
St. Patrick's Cathedral hosts a concert by the Choir of St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, the recognized mother church for all Christians of that strife-torn city. David Drinkell conducts a program of a-cappella works by Tallis, Byrd (the Mass for Four Voices), Rachmaninoff, and others, interspersed with organ interludes. (Fifth Ave. at 51st St. July 3 at 1:30. No tickets necessary.)

RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC
Two concerts assembled by the cellist Ronald Thomas. June 28-29 at 7:30: An all-Schumann program featuring three lesser-known works, the Violin Sonata in A Minor and the Piano Trio in G Minor (both late works, from 1851) and the Arabesque for Piano, Op. 18. The performers are the pianist Mihae Lee, the violinist Daniel Phillips, and Thomas. ♦ June 30 at 7:30 and July 1 at 4: Music by Beethoven, Hindemith (the Sonata for Horn and Piano), and Brahms (the exquisite Horn Trio). The hornist William Purvis joins Phillips and Lee. (Fulton Ferry Landing. 718-624-2083.)

SUNDAYS ON THE ISLAND
The pianist Adriane Kim, the cellist Wolfram Koessel, and others play Dvořák's Piano Quintet at Le Refuge Inn, a bed-and-breakfast nestled among the lanes and yacht slips of City Island. (620 City Island Ave., the Bronx. For more information, call 914-664-6934. July 1 at 12:30.)

"CROSSCURRENTS" CONCERT SERIES: EXTENSION ENSEMBLE
In the five decades before his death, in 1999, the blind, transient composer and poet Moondog (né Louis Thomas Hardin) was a shadowy presence on the New York scene. Flitting between the worlds of classical and jazz, recording for the Columbia and Prestige labels, hanging out with Charlie Parker, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich, and habitually dressed in a Viking helmet and cloak (a bit of sartorial shtick which he claimed was a protest against the machinations of the fashion industry), Moondog combined American Indian rhythms

BOOK CURRENTS
Long Live the Queen

Queens lead double lives, as women and as figments of our collective imagination. In her long old age, Queen Victoria often corrected idealized portraits of herself by her biographers, who tended to overvalue her needlework and her juvenile poetry: "Really what will people not say & invent!" In **BECOMING VICTORIA** (Yale), which is being published on the centenary of the queen's death, Lynne Vallone reassesses the importance of Victoria's early writing. In her teen-age journals, the princess longs for adventure: "The road is as flat as a table; we might go on very fast, but I am sorry to say, we do not."

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

Vallone describes Victoria's youth and gender as "the essence of her sovereign power," in contrast to Elizabeth I, who liked to refer to herself as a prince. In Robin Maxwell's historical novel **VIRGIN** (Arcade), which imagines Elizabeth's girlhood relationship with Thomas Seymour, the princess even cross-dresses. After a quite literally bodice-ripping scene in an overheated garden, Elizabeth, "just fifteen years old, dressed as a boy," rides off "into the night alone for an assignation with her love."

Perhaps more than any other female regent, the Queen of Sheba exists primarily as a myth. In his new travelogue, **SHEBA** (Houghton Mifflin), Nicholas Clapp records his quest for the real Sheba in Jerusalem, Yemen, and Ethiopia, where the 1955 constitution states that the Queen of Sheba became pregnant by King Solomon and founded a royal dynasty that extended directly to Haile Selassie. Clapp also collects images from popular culture: in one nineteenth-century American circus, "The Queen of Sheba girls" performed "the most beautiful and chaste Terpsichorean Divertissement" or, as one journalist described it, "a hip rumble."

—Nell Freudenberger

FORENSIC

Teens are disappearing in Algonquin Bay. Many write the missing off as runaways. But John Cardinal suspects a serial killer. When another teen drops from sight, Cardinal must act swiftly to outsmart the killers and save a life.

FORTY WORDS FOR SORROW
by Giles Blunt
Pub. Price: $24.95
Our Price: $19.96
Readers' Advantage Price: $17.96

FAST LANE

Miranda has it all. Youth. Wealth. A closet full of Manolos. And all the drugs, alcohol and parties the society fast lane has to offer. But rather than being heralded as the latest It girl, she would rather be a normal girl. Easier said than done.

NORMAL GIRL
by Molly Jong-Fast
Pub. Price: $21.95
Our Price: $17.56
Readers' Advantage Price: $15.80

FISHERMAN

Mourning the death of her husband, a fisherman on a Florida island, Mattie Blue spins a haunting tale of her beloved—his birth, his love of the sea, his fear of a family legend of drowning, and their unflagging devotion to each other.

REMEMBERING BLUE
by Connie May Fowler
Pub. Price: $14.00
Our Price: $11.20
Readers' Advantage Price: $10.08

FUNERAL

Addy Abraham travels to a Caribbean island for the funeral of her beloved nanny, Louise. Amid the chaos and grief of Louise's family, Addy confronts the unspoken reality of Louise's life and discovers new hope for her own.

ALL THE FINEST GIRLS
by Alexandra Styron
Pub. Price: $23.95
Our Price: $19.16
Readers' Advantage Price: $17.24

FEET

Her feet bound according to ritual, May escapes from her abusive marriage, fleeing to a Shanghai brothel where she lands a Western husband. As they travel east and west, they encounter a colorful cast of women scarred by similar abuses.

THE BINDING CHAIR
by Kathryn Harrison
Pub. Price: $13.00
Our Price: $10.40
Readers' Advantage Price: $9.36

FRACAS

An idyllic site in the California hills, the tranquil town of Carson Springs is rocked when a widow falls in love with a much younger man. Their relationship and her unexpected pregnancy wreak havoc on family, friends and foes alike.

STRANGER IN PARADISE
by Eileen Goudge
Pub. Price: $24.95
Our Price: $19.96
Readers' Advantage Price: $17.96

JOIN READERS' ADVANTAGE™ AND SAVE AN ADDITIONAL 10% IN-STORE • 5% ONLINE

BARNES&NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS
www.bn.com

© 2001 Barnes & Noble, Inc.

Prices effective at store locations through 7/8/01

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with a canonic form of counterpoint which he claimed was even purer than Palestrina's or Bach's. His music is the focus of this brass quintet's concert of American works, which also includes pieces by John Cage, Earle Brown ("December 1952," the first piece ever written in "graphic" notation, without conventional musical symbols), and Anthony Plog, given in the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum's outdoor terrace and garden. (Fifth Ave. at 91st St. July 3 at 6:30. No tickets are necessary, but concertgoers are requested to bring a blanket for lawn seating.)

OUT OF TOWN

STORM KING MUSIC FESTIVAL
The influences of immigration and technology on American music are the twin themes of this festival, now in its third year. June 27-28 at 8: After two concerts exploring music of the nineteen-thirties and forties, the festival presents two "Composer Nights," showcasing musicians of today, including works by Carman Moore, Donald Martino, Joshua Fried, and Judith Shatin. ♦ June 29 at 8: A program of cross-disciplinary works involving electronic music, video projections, sculpture, and solo flute, by the composers Anne La Berge, Ann Wellmer, and Raymond Torres-Santos and the sculptor Kim Baranowski. ♦ June 30 at 8: The final concert of the season, featuring the flutist Barbara Siesel, performing works by Bach, Schubert, Hindemith, Copland, and Sidney Corbett ("Lineage," a collaboration with Siesel and the mixed-media artist Bruce Wands which focusses on the experiences of Holocaust survivors who resettled in the United States). (Walter Reade, Jr., Theatre, Storm King School, 314 Mountain Rd., Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y. For more information, call 212-662-6020.)

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL
June 28 at 4:30: Members of Caramoor's Young Artists Ensemble sing scenes and arias from bel-canto operas by Verdi and Bellini, in a semi-staged format. (Given in the Spanish Courtyard.) ♦ June 29 at 8: As a prelude to his productions of the "Otello" operas by Verdi and Rossini, Will Crutchfield presents a concert of music set to Shakespearean verse by a range of composers (including Arne, Purcell, Schumann, and Sibelius). Georgia Jarman, Sally Wilson, Michael Lockley, and Daniel Mobbs are the singers, accompanied by the pianist Rachelle Jonck. (Spanish Courtyard.) ♦ June 30 at 8:30: An evening of American theatrical songs, with the vocalist Audra MacDonald. (Venetian Theatre.) ♦ July 1 at 4:30: "Carnival in Venice," a concert of Vivaldi concertos for winds and strings, with the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (Venetian Theatre.) (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

TANGLEWOOD
June 29 at 8:30: The Juilliard String Quartet performs music by Beethoven, Bartók (the Quartet No. 6), and Mendelssohn. (Ozawa Hall.) ♦ June 30 at 5:45: Garrison Keillor brings his Minnesota troupe to the Tanglewood Shed for "A Prairie Home Companion." ♦ July 1 at 2:30: The Juilliard Quartet returns for a program of Mozart, Schoenberg (the String Trio), and more Beethoven (the "Harp" Quartet). (Ozawa Hall.) ♦ July 2 at 8:30: Peter Serkin, whose presence was greatly missed last March at Carnegie Hall, is back to concertizing. His latest enthusiasms are Haydn and Schoenberg, the two great revolutionaries of Viennese music, and his first Tanglewood concert pairs three of Haydn's piano trios with Schoenberg's "Ode to Napoleon," Phantasy for Violin and Piano, and Chamber Symphony No. 1 (in Webern's five-instrument reduction). No other pianist has matched his ability to make great modernist music shiver with life. The assisting musicians include the clarinettist David Shifrin, the violinists Pamela Frank and Ida Kavafian, the violist Steven Tenenbom, and the cellist Fred Sherry. (Ozawa Hall.) ♦ July 3-4 at 7: James Taylor plays the Shed. (Lenox, Mass. 617-266-1200.)

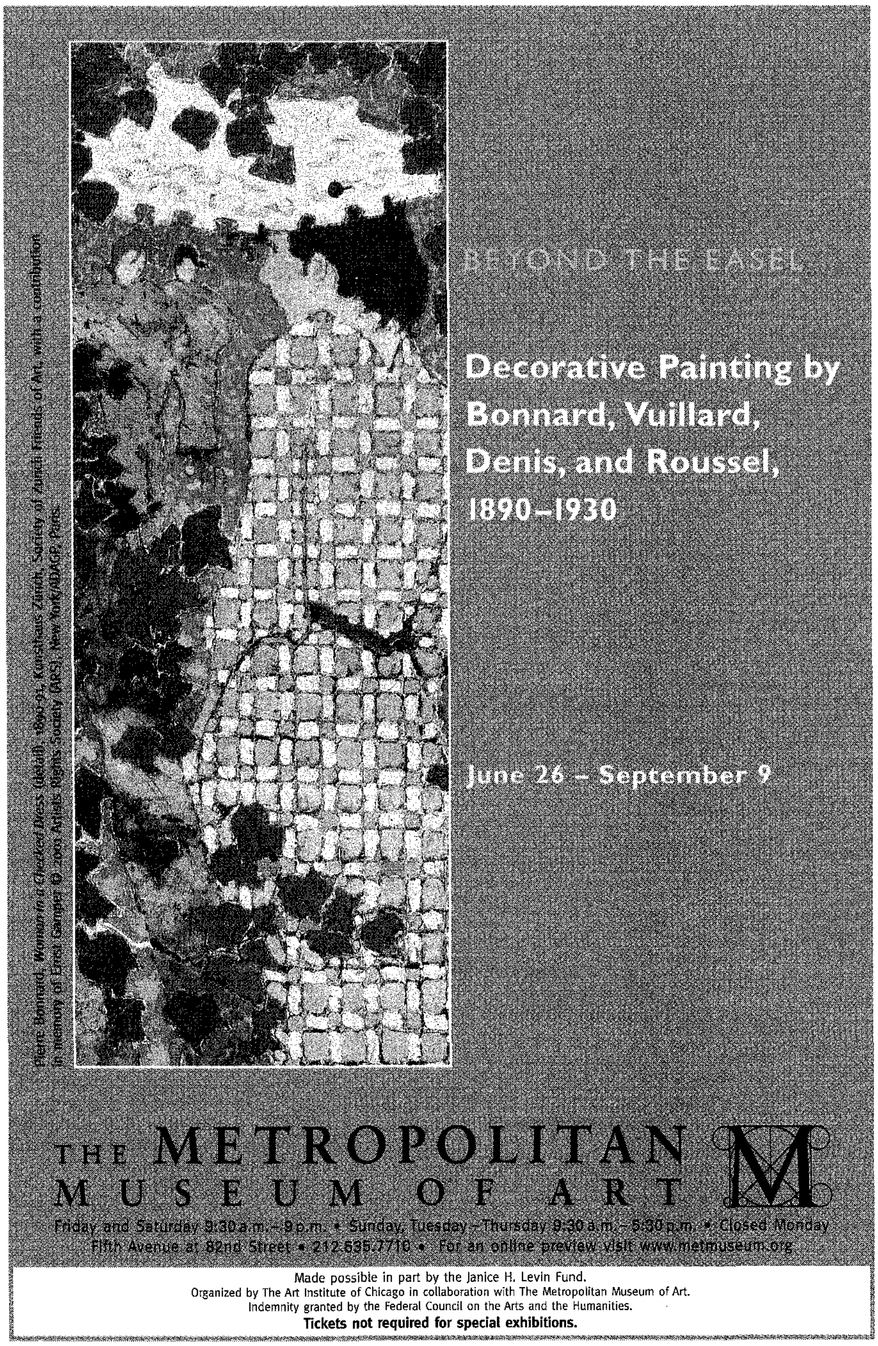
MUSIC MOUNTAIN
The Zapolski String Quartet, a Danish ensemble formed in 1993, makes its U.S. début with two concerts at Music Mountain. June 30 at 8: Mendelssohn's stormy Quartet in F Minor, Schumann's Piano Quartet (with the pianist Elizabeth Wolff), and the Quartet No. 2 by Per Nørgård, Denmark's twentieth-century master of the genre. ♦ July 1 at 3: Haydn's "Emperor" Quartet, Prokofiev's rarely heard Quartet No. 2 in F Major, and the Piano Quintet by Shostakovich (with Wolff). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

ALL ABOARD!
The summertime counterpart to the New York Botanical Garden's popular winter Holiday Train Show opens on June 30. Colorful engines and cars chug through the idyllic landscape of the twelve-acre Everett Children's Adventure Garden, passing by a waterfall, a stream, and lots of greenery. The line has been decorated with miniature versions of the homes where important American artists and writers once lived. The Bronx cottage of Edgar Allan Poe is among them. On opening day from 10 to 6, in an unrelated, but equally interesting, event, the Children's Garden features a special program on carnivorous plants. (Bronx Park. 718-817-8700. Through Sept. 9.)

READINGS
June 28 at 7: By Jimmy Breslin, from his latest work of fiction, "I Don't Want to Go to Jail: A Good Novel." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ July 1 at 7: By Chuck Palahniuk, from his novel "Choke," and by Anna Maxted, from her novel "Running in Heels." (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALK
July 1 at 2: Barry Moreno, a historian and librarian at the Statue of Liberty National Monument, offers an illustrated lecture on that icon of American promise. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. For more information, call 534-1672, ext 257.)


BEYOND THE EASEL
Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis, and Roussel, 1890–1930
June 26 – September 9
Pierre Bonnard, *Woman in a Checked Dress* (detail), 1890-91, Kunsthaus Zürich, Society of Zurich Friends of Art, with a contribution in memory of Ernst Gamper © 2001 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
Friday and Saturday 9:30 a.m.–9 p.m. • Sunday, Tuesday–Thursday 9:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. • Closed Monday
Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street • 212.635.7710 • For an online preview visit www.metmuseum.org
Made possible in part by the Janice H. Levin Fund.
Organized by The Art Institute of Chicago in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Indemnity granted by the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.
Tickets not required for special exhibitions.

MOVIES OPENING

A.I.
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening June 29.

BABY BOY
A drama about a young black man (Tyrese) in South Central Los Angeles, written and directed by John Singleton as a companion piece to his 1991 film, "Boyz N the Hood." Opening June 27.

THE CLOSET
Daniel Auteuil plays an accountant who pretends to be gay so that his colleagues will find him fascinating, in this comedy directed by Francis Veber. In French. Opening June 29.

COME UNDONE
Sébastien Lifshitz directed this drama about first love between two young men. In French. Opening June 29.

CRAZY/BEAUTIFUL
A Latino boy (Jay Hernandez) and a rich white girl (Kirsten Dunst) fall in love in this teen drama directed by John Stockwell. Opening June 29.

THE CRIMSON RIVERS
A crime thriller set at an élite private school in the Alps, with Jean Reno and Vincent Cassel. In French. Opening June 29.

LUMUMBA
A bio-pic about Patrice Emery Lumumba, the first leader of independent Congo, who was assassinated in 1961. Directed by Raoul Peck. In French and Lingala. Opening June 27. (Film Forum.)

FILM NOTES

THE ANNIVERSARY PARTY
Alan Cumming as a charming but volatile bisexual writer who is about to direct a big-budget movie; Jennifer Jason Leigh as a neurotic actress who screws up her roles by turning everything into tragedy. In Los Angeles, they throw an anniversary party, invite their friends, get tanked, and then take Ecstasy, at which point everything begins to fall apart. Cumming and Jason Leigh wrote and directed this house-party picture together, and shot it quickly in digital video with various friends and colleagues (Kevin Kline, Phoebe Cates, Gwyneth Paltrow, Parker Posey). The movie has the kind of intensity that actors love—scenes of confrontation, breakdown, and self-revelation—but it's neither well-constructed nor particularly original.—*David Denby* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

ATLANTIS: THE LOST EMPIRE
This animated feature adds little to Disney's tradition of technical virtuosity, but it does subtract one thing: the songs. Presumably this was done to make the movie more palatable to adults driven mad by ten thousand replays of "Be My Guest." The story also has some grownup elements, like characters who die, though they do so mostly offscreen or in blinding flashes of white light. An inventor named Milo (voiced by Michael J. Fox) gets plucked from the boiler room to lead a mission to discover Atlantis. The story won't surprise you, but in a bleak summer season it at least has the merit of being coherent. Some of the sequences have an epic grandeur, especially the battle with the supersized lobster that guards the underwater city's entrance.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village East Cinemas.)

BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY
Helen Fielding's creation has finally arrived onscreen; in place of her wiry, worried tone we now find an almost confident pleasure in mishaps and man-hunting. The director, Sharon Maguire, has shaped the fretful original into a basic romantic comedy, leaving an aching Bridget (Renée Zellweger) with a choice of nice Mr. Darcy (Colin Firth) or dastardly Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant). These three leads are much better than the movie they front. Self-pity has its limitations as the engine of drama, and the idea that a young woman might be not just unhappy but somehow incomplete without a man would have struck even Jane Austen as laughably passé.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 4/16/01.) (Cinema 3rd Avenue, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, and State.)

EVOLUTION
It starts as a fifties war-of-the-worlds pastiche: an alien life-form arrives in a meteor and quickly mutates, threatening to destroy Arizona as we know it. But the life-form has a hidden weakness, and only two junior-college science teachers (David Duchovny and Orlando Jones) can stop it. As they investigate, the two men become a joshing white-black buddy team, a low-grade version of the partnership between Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith in "Men in Black." The lousy jokes they exchange undercut the tension and destroy what might have been an interesting idea: that the organism, energized by the earth's atmosphere, will recap the process of evolution from a single-cell organism to primate in only a few days. Played for laughs, the idea just seems an odd way of launching a multitude of bugs, dinosaurs, and apes into houses and shopping malls. The movie itself mutates from one thing to another, throwing in beer slobs for the frat-house crowd, fart jokes for the preteens, and so on. Directed by Ivan Reitman, who used to know what he was doing.—*D.D.* (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, Coronet Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS
Fourteen-year-olds will hold their heads in misery, but adults may be mesmerized by an awfulness reminiscent of youth movies from forty years ago. The scene: the street-racing subculture of Los Angeles. The characters: a charismatic leader and possible hijacker (the superbly named Vin Diesel), ready-to-rumble female grease monkeys with bare midriffs (including Michelle Rodriguez), and a handsome undercover cop (Paul Walker) who infiltrates the car-racing gang and develops ambiguous loyalties. Rob Cohen, the director, tries hard for B-movie schlock magic, and attains it during the high-speed car chases, which are genuinely exciting. See this when you are too tired to think.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Union Square, and Waverly.)

JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY
The 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, with Anita O'Day, Big Maybelle, Dinah Washington, Gerry Mulligan, Thelonious Monk, Chico Hamilton, Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, and other joys. Bert Stern's camera style infectiously conveys the festival's happy, lazy-day atmosphere; the America's Cup observation trials, which are also going on, are an unstressed part of the film's visual texture. In the evening, when Mahalia Jackson, with her majestic chest tones, sings the word "soul," she defines it for all time. This 1960 picture is one of the most pleasurable of all concert films.—*Pauline Kael* (Bryant Park; July 2.)

KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN
Set in a nameless South American country, Hector Babenco's 1985 film version of Manuel Puig's famous novel is about a homosexual window dresser, Molina (William Hurt), and a revolutionary, Valentín (Raul Julia), who share a prison cell. Molina tries to comfort Valentín and help him forget his pain and misery by telling him the stories of old movies. Hurt is just about the only thing to look at; he's very likable in the scenes where Molina reveals his tenderness and warmth and humor, and the picture can work on audiences in the way that "Midnight Cowboy" did. But it's a slack piece of moviemaking, and as sentimental as the forties screen romances that Molina is infatuated with; that is to say, it moves an audience at the obvious points.—*P.K.* (Quad Cinema and Museum of Modern Art; June 28.)

LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER
Guns strapped to her thighs, her lower lip as radically cleft as Kirk Douglas's chin, Angelina Jolie leaps and bungie-jumps her way through action sequences as Lara Croft, upper-class English adventuress. Jolie is cocksure and insinuating; she gets by just fine on pure attitude—acting isn't required. Unfortunately, the wit of the movie resides entirely in her face and body. Jolie is matched up with nonentities and left stranded on ugly sets (basically a single enormous soundstage dressed three different ways and repeatedly smashed apart). The movie is derived from a popular video game, and it's about bad guys assembling the pieces of an ancient stone triangle in order to control the world's supply of American cheese. No, that can't be right: in order to control all the power in the world. Yes, that's it. Simon West is the unimaginative, humorless director; the movie was "written" by Patrick Massett and John Zinman.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

MEMENTO
Guy Pearce plays Leonard, a former insurance investigator who has mislaid his short-term memory; leave the room and come back ten minutes later, and he won't remember you. To help his case, and to solve the apparent murder of his wife, Leonard tattoos himself with memoranda and drives around the lowlier districts of L.A. County. At the same time, he has a couple of acquaintances (Carrie-Anne Moss and Joe Pantoliano) who use his condition for their own unscrupulous ends. There is a fine, despairing comedy to these events—not just in our fidgety hero but in the constant thwarting of our need to know. The young British writer and director Christopher Nolan, who has every intention of putting us through the mill, doubles his fun by running the whole story backward.—*A.L.* (3/19/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and State.)

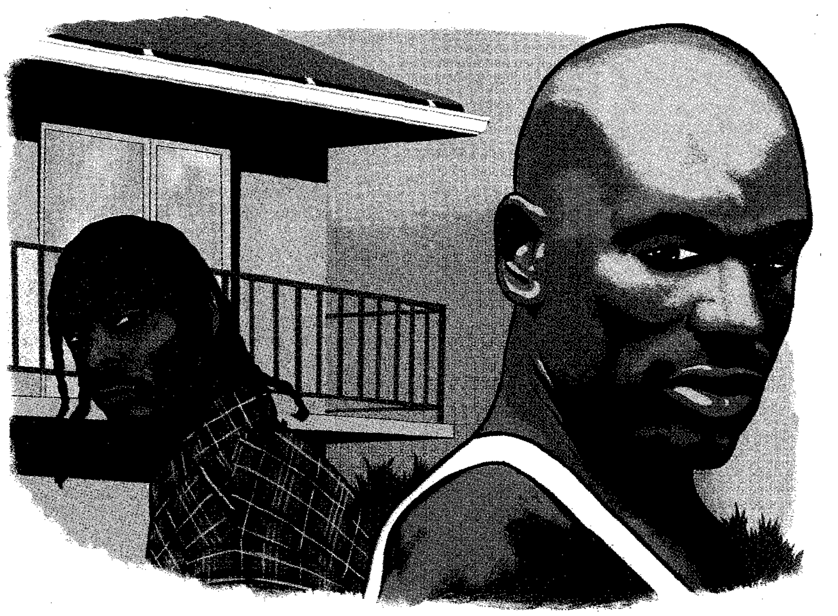
MOULIN ROUGE
A frantically ambitious postmodernist musical in which no single song is performed from beginning to end and no dance number is staged without the dancers' movements being kaleidoscoped into a dozen angles. Set in a stylized and digitalized Paris, the movie offers the Moulin Rouge night club as a seething Belle Époque Studio 54, where a fresh-from-the-provinces poet named Christian (Ewan McGregor) falls in love with Satine (Nicole Kidman), a consumptive cancan dancer and courtesan. The story is no more than a flimsy outline, but it still manages to combine the Orpheus myth and "Camille" and to vaguely evoke about a dozen other films. Baz Luhrmann, the director, has a talent for décor, sudden shifts in perspective, and gentle, twinkling nighttime effects, but he whips much of the movie into an opéra-bouffe clownishness.—*D.D.* (5/28/01) (Battery Park 16, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

OUR SONG
Jim McKay's film about three high-school girls living in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, is, at first, dramatically inert, but it gains power as it accumulates detail: the way the girls carry themselves, seek out their parents, flirt with boys, and brush against questions of life and death.—*M.A.* (Angelika Film Center and BAM Rose Cinemas.)

PEARL HARBOR
At three hours, the new Michael Bay film lasts longer than the historical event it purports to describe; this will strike most viewers as an ominous precedent, especially if Bay starts to get interested in Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Ben Affleck and Josh Hartnett star as a couple of boyhood friends—one bumptious, the other shy—who join the Air Force together, play aerial chicken together, and even fall in love with the same girl (Kate Beckinsale). They also manage to get a couple of planes airborne and knock out some Japanese Zeros, a feat that is no less noble for being untroubled by historical fact. The movie feels big and baggy rather than epic, and, by the end, the stitching has come apart; you never quite believe in the spate of digital effects, let alone in the weaving of war and romance. With Alec Baldwin, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Jon Voight, who rises manfully to his feet in the role of F.D.R.—*A.L.* (6/4/01) (Battery Park 16, Cinema I, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

THE PRINCESS AND THE WARRIOR
Two damaged people—a sweet-tempered nurse (Franka Potente) who lives and works in a psychiatric ward and a surly tough guy (Benno Fürmann) mysteriously waylaid by sadness—are drawn together, seemingly by fate. But isn't fate just another name for an overlapping pattern of need and desire? Writer-director Tom Tykwer, who earlier made "Run Lola Run," works less kinetically this time. He varies the tempo: there are meditative passages punctuated by abrupt outbreaks of emotion—a mesmerizing new style that draws us into mysteries in an intuitive rather than explicit way. A strange, accomplished, and, finally, touching romantic drama. In German.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

QUADROPHENIA
The mods were an oddly constructed counterculture: English boys who loved dressing up in seersucker suits and (on the weekends) stomping heads. This 1979 picture, directed by Franc Roddam and produced by the members of the Who, lovingly and numbingly re-creates the year 1964, when mods and rockers (a pale Anglo version of the Hell's Angels) clashed on the beaches of Brighton. Phil Daniels, a Pete Townshend look-alike, plays Jimmy, the alienated main character, trapped in an adolescent Bermuda Triangle of girls, drugs, and music. The movie no longer plays like the noisy rock spectacle it was originally received as (indeed, there's not enough Who music), and today it's enjoyable mostly for its preserved-in-amber elements, like the chrome-laden Vespas and buttoned-up fashions. It's fun to watch a young, leonine Sting thrash the police as a mod leader, but it's not until the final scene along the white cliffs of Dover, where music and image merge in an ecstatic moment, that all the moping seems worthwhile.—*M.A.* (Film Forum; June 29-July 3.)



Snoop Doggy Dogg and Tyrese in John Singleton's "Baby Boy."

MARK ZINGARELLI

SEXY BEAST
A tale of expatriate Cockneys, dry-roasted by the Spanish sun and determined to get England off their backs. Gal (Ray Winstone), once a crook, and his wife, Deedee (Amanda Redman), once a porno star, have retired to the Costa del Sol; now they are tracked down by an old acquaintance, Don (Ben Kingsley), who invites Gal back home for one last crime. Jonathan Glazer, the young British director making his début feature, turns the first half of the picture into a cool study of hotheads, saturated with creative cursing; the second half, which finds Gal returning to London, stumbles and slides into the grim traditions of gangsterland. But the movie needs to be seen for its clean compositions, its sure touch of fantasy, and, above all, for the forbidding presence of Kingsley—the prince of darkness, lightly disguised as a human being.—*A.L.* (6/18 & 25/01) (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

SHREK
The Shrek of the title is a bile-green ogre with disgusting personal habits and, this being an animated feature, an essential sweetness of nature. On the orders of a wicked lord, he rescues a princess from a dragon, only to screw up the plans by falling in love with her. The new DreamWorks production is overtly snook-cocking, turning every available fairy tale on its head: the princess has a short temper and karate skills, the dragon has the hots for a donkey, and the lord's castle is as tacky as a theme park. On the other hand, the film itself is hardly rough and real; however cunning the rendering of surfaces, there's still something flat and charmless in the digital look, and most of the pleasure rises not from the main romance but from the quick, incidental gags. With voices by Mike Myers, Cameron Diaz, Eddie Murphy, and John Lithgow.—*A.L.* (5/21/01) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

SONGCATCHER
A musicologist (Janet McTeer) stumbles into turn-of-the-century Appalachia, where the men are gruff and golden-hearted, the women true, and everyone sings on key. This makes for a fine soundtrack but a shaky movie, especially one that purports to deal with a lesbian love affair and man's inhumanity to woman. The writer-director Maggie Greenwald takes her agenda and dresses it up in "Little House on the Prairie" finery; the result is not unlike being bludgeoned by a banjo.—*M.A.* (First & 62nd Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

STARTUP.COM
A fascinating cinéma-vérité documentary account of how two very young men—Kaleil Isaza Tuzman, a Goldman, Sachs employee, and Tom Herman, a techie—started an Internet company in New York, burned through sixty million dollars, lost their way, and got swallowed up by another company, all within eighteen months. The filmmakers Jehane Noujaim and Chris Hegedus nosed their way into meetings and arguments and drove around with the two men as they aired their desires and fears. Tuzman is burly and handsome, with an easy, ready way about him; Herman, who keeps growing and shaving a dark beard, is high-minded and tends to be diffident about the fate of the enterprise itself. The movie's account of their dealings with each other is painfully funny and very intimate, perhaps too much so: it would have been useful to have more detail about how the business actually worked and why it went wrong.—*D.D.* (5/14/01) (Film Forum.)

SWORDFISH
For about an hour, it's nasty fun. John Travolta plays a shadowy fanatical patriot who terrorizes innocent people to prove to professional terrorists how tough he will be on them (or something like that); Hugh Jackman is a rather brawny hacker employed by Travolta; Halle Berry, not invariably clothed, is the lure that keeps Jackman in place. The screenplay, by Skip Woods, consists of a series of erotic taunts; the action, directed by Dominic Sena, is preposterous but entertaining. Somewhere along the line, however, the plot becomes so far-fetched, and the digital effects and violence so opportunistic, that one loses interest. The digitally innocent will be excited by shots of a helicopter toting a bus through the buildings of downtown Los Angeles. Produced by the veteran summer-season sledgehammer Joel Silver.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Union Square.)

WITH A FRIEND LIKE HARRY. . .
A smart new horror story, at once thrilling and upsetting, from the director Dominik Moll. Michel (Laurent Lucas), a typically fretful father on vacation with his wife and children, meets an old schoolmate named Harry (Sergi López), who promptly starts changing Michel's life for the better. This entails buying him a new car and then getting to work on his ornery parents, his tired wife, and his frustrated ambitions as a writer. You can't really fault Harry's logic, and that's what makes him so daunting; his analysis of Michel's messy existence would do for just about anyone. It's his homicidal methods that somehow feel de trop, although Michel can no more be rid of him than Othello could slip from the clutches of Iago. All this is told with a tight, nervy concentration. Anyone thinking of getting married and starting a family should probably stay clear of Moll's movie. As for driving around Europe, forget it. In French.—*A.L.* (5/7/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

BRIDE OF THE WIND
Angelika Film Center and First & 62nd Cinemas.

DR. DOLITTLE 2
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Olympia I and II, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, Union Square, and Waverly, and Ziegfeld.

DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN
The Screening Room.

THE GOLDEN BOWL (5/7/01)
Paris.

HIMALAYA
Cinema Village and 59th Street East Cinema.

UNDER THE SAND (5/21/01)
The Screening Room.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

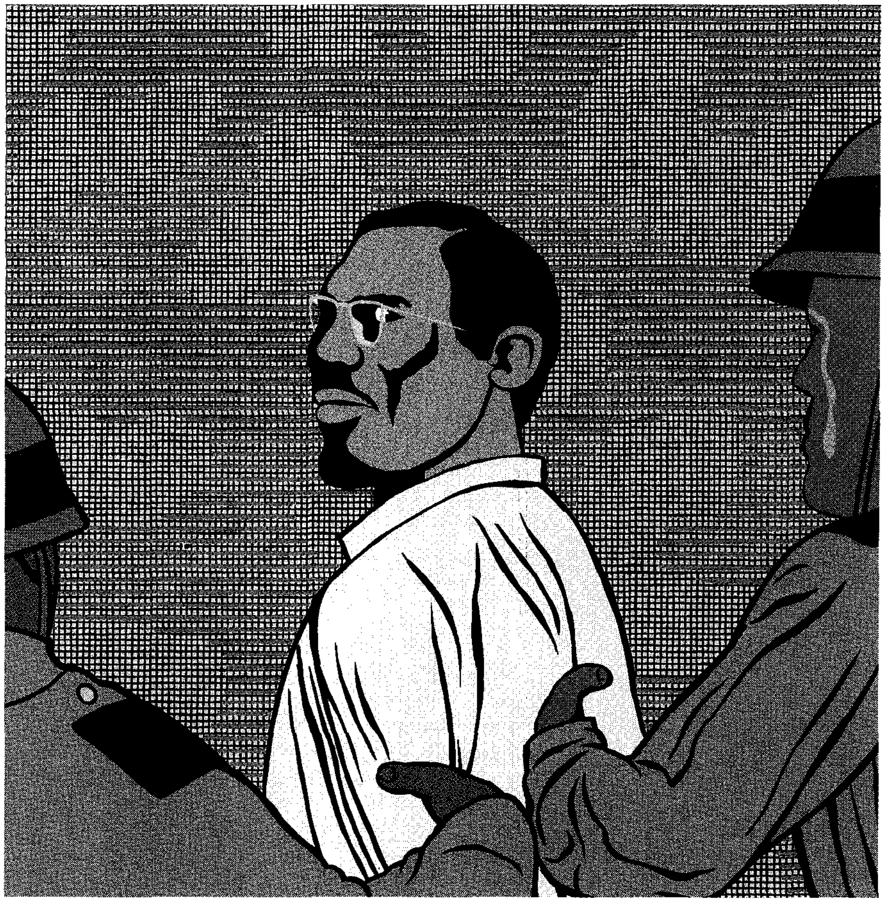
REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A centennial celebration of Gary Cooper. June 30 at 2: "The Fountainhead" (1949, King Vidor). ♦ June 30 at 4:30: "The Hanging Tree" (1959, Delmer Daves). ♦ July 1 at 2: "Vera Cruz" (1954, Robert Aldrich). ♦ July 1 at 4: "Man of the West" (1958, Anthony Mann). ♦ Repertory night. June 30 at 6:30: "Persona" (1966, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—A Paul Verhoeven retrospective. June 27 at 7, June 29 at 7, and June 30 at 9:45: "Basic Instinct" (1992). ♦ June 27 and June 29 at 9:30 and June 30 at 12:15: "Showgirls" (1995). ♦ June 28 at 7 and June 30 at 4:45: "Hollow Man" (2000). ♦ June 28 at 9:30, June 29 at 12, and June 30 at 2 and 7: "Starship Troopers" (1997). ♦ Essential cinema. June 29 at 8: "Los Olvidados" (1951, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish). ♦ June 30 at 7:45: "L'Age d'Or" (1930, Buñuel and Salvador Dali; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (777-3456)—June 27 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Weekend" (1968, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). ♦ June 28 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Sweet Body of Bianca" (1983, Nanni Moretti; in Italian). ♦ June 29 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Palombella Rosa" (1989, Moretti; in Italian). ♦ June 30 at 2, 5, and 9: "L' Humanité" (2000, Bruno Dumont; in French). ♦ July 1-2 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Human Resources" (2000, Laurent Cantet; in French). ♦ July 3 at 4 and 8: "Seven Samurai" (1954, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese).



Raoul Peck's "Lumumba" opens June 27 at Film Forum.

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing. The feature on July 2 is "Jazz on a Summer's Day" (†).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—"Ladies They Talk About: The Women of Pre-Code." June 27: "Affairs of Cellini" (1934, Gregory La Cava) and "Stolen Heaven" (1931, George Abbott). ♦ June 28: "Working Girls" (1931, Dorothy Arzner) and "Ladies of the Big House" (1931, Marion Gering). ♦ Starting June 29 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: A new print of the Who musical "Quadrophenia" (†).

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (360-4321)—A series of films that feature Italian cinematographers. June 30 at 3: "Adua and Company" (1960, Antonio Pietrangeli; in Italian). ♦ June 30 at 7: "La Nuit de Varennes" (1982, Ettore Scola; in French and Italian).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—June 28 at 6: "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (†). ♦ "1925," audience favorites from the museum's silent-film archives. June 29 at 3:30: "Dick Turpin" (1925, John G. Blystone). ♦ June 29 at 6: "A Kiss for Cinderella" (1925, Herbert Brenon). ♦ June 30 at 3:30 "The Freshman" (1925, Sam Taylor and Fred C. Newmeyer). ♦ June 30 at 6: "Lady Windermere's Fan" (1925, Ernst Lubitsch). ♦ July 1 at 1 and July 2 at 6: "Lazybones" (1925, Frank Borzage). ♦ July 1 at 3 and July 3 at 3:30: "Variety" (1925, E. A. Dupont). ♦ July 1 at 5 and July 2 at 3:30: "Sally of the Sawdust" (1925, D. W. Griffith).

THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO
25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Restored silent films with full orchestration. June 29 at 6 and June 30 and July 1 at 2: "La Terre" (1921, André Antoine) and "The Wind" (1928, Victor Sjöström). ♦ Through Sept. 16: "Hello, Goodbye," screenings of pilots, premières, and final episodes of classic television shows. Thursdays through Sundays at 3. ♦ Through Sept. 16: "Muppets Forever!," a celebration of Jim Henson's legacy. Tuesdays through Sundays at 12:30.

THE SCREENING ROOM
54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Through July 5: A celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Screening Room. All tickets are five dollars. June 29-July 3 at 3:30: "Willy Wonka" (1971, Mel Stuart). ♦ June 29 at 5:45, 7:45, and 9:45: "Cafe Society" (1998, Raymond DeFelitta). ♦ June 30 at 5:45, 7:45, and 9:45: "Unmade Beds" (1997, Nicholas Barker). ♦ July 1 at 5:45, 7:45, and 9:45: "The Terrorist" (1999, Santosh Sivan; in Tamil). ♦ July 2 at 5:45, 7:45, and 9:45: "Praise" (2000, John Curran). ♦ July 3 at 5:45, 7:45, and 9:45: "The Celebration" (1998, Thomas Vinterberg; in Danish, German, and English).

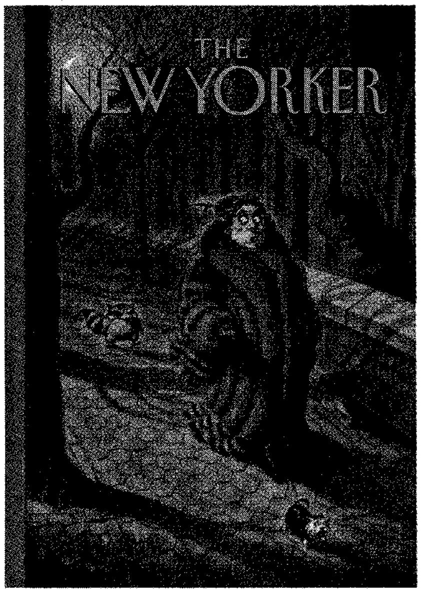
WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through July 12: "Urban Ghosts and Legends: The Cinema of Tsai Ming-liang." All films are in Taiwanese. June 29 at 1:30 and 6:15, June 30 at 3 and 8, and July 2 at 1 and 6: "Vive l'Amour" (1994). ♦ June 29 at 4 and 8:45 and June 30 at 5:30: "The River" (1998). ♦ July 1 at 3 and 7:30 and July 2 at 3:30 and 8:30: "Rebels of the Neon God" (1992).

ADVERTISEMENT

A SPECIAL OFFER FOR NEW YORKER READERS

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

NEW YORKER COVER ART PRINT

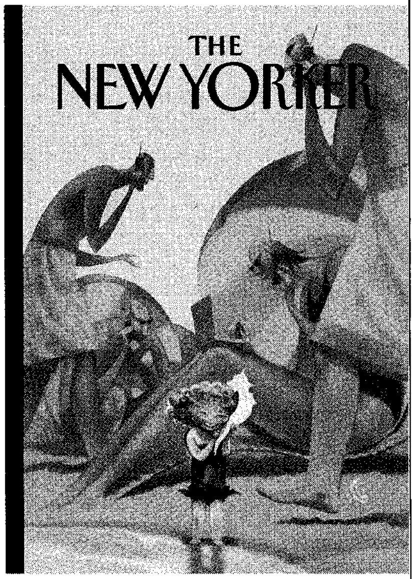


Tailed, January 24, 1994
A classic cover by Peter de Sève.

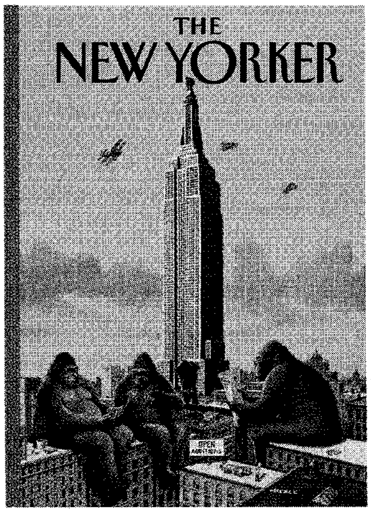
Fine-art offset lithographic prints. Size 22" X 28" / Acid-free archival matte paper. Signed and numbered limited edition of 500.

FRAMED $395
(Plus $25 shipping and handling*)
Gallery-quality wood frame. Please specify matte-black or mahogany wood for the William Wegman cover. Please specify matte-black or white-washed natural wood for the J.J. Sempé, Bruce McCall, Peter de Sève, or Carter Goodrich covers.

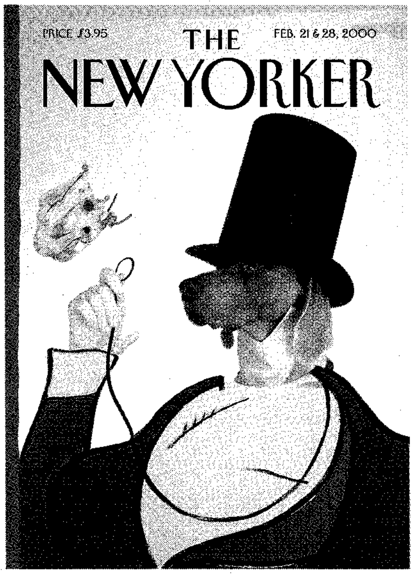
UNFRAMED $280
(Plus $15 shipping and handling*)



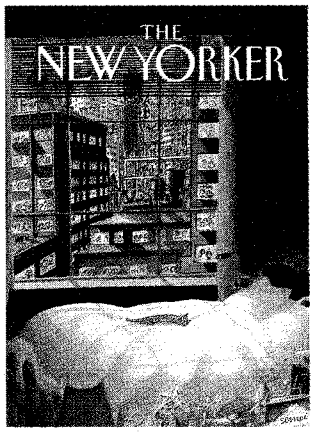
Higher Calling, August 3, 1998
A classic cover by Carter Goodrich.



King Kong Call, January 23, 1995
A classic cover by Bruce McCall.



February 21 & 28, 2000
The 75th Anniversary cover by William Wegman.



Luxurious, Quiet, and Cozy, Nov. 24, 1997
A classic cover by J.J. Sempé.

TO ORDER ONLINE, VISIT WWW.CARTOONBANK.COM
or send check or money order made payable to The Cartoon Bank, with your name and address to:
The Cartoon Bank, a New Yorker Magazine Company, 145 Palisade St. Suite 373, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522.
For phone orders, call The Cartoon Bank at 1-800-897-toon

*Residents of CA, CO, GA, IA, IL, KY, MA, MI, NY, OH, and PA add applicable sales tax, Canada 7% GST. Offer available only in U.S. and Canada. Please allow up to two weeks for delivery. Thirty-day money-back guarantee.

CARTOONBANK.COM
A New Yorker Magazine Company

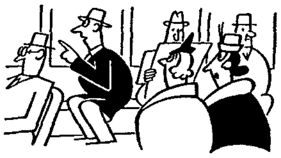
© 2001 by The Condé Nast Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW YORKER

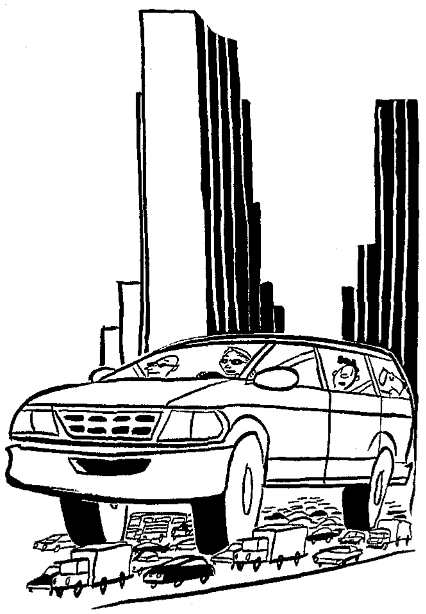
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
ALONE TOGETHER



Summertime. The living may be easy, but the driving is hard. During the last ten years, traffic volume in the United States has increased by fifteen per cent. No one counts on getting anywhere in a hurry anymore, and transportation science seems to be at a loss to invent methods for eliminating bottlenecks and relieving congestion. Volume on most highways is so heavy that a single on-ramp incident can back up traffic for hours after the cars involved have left the scene. Drivers are now accustomed to the phenomenon of the phantom accident: three lanes of tightly packed cars inch forward for miles, and then, suddenly, everyone is going sixty again, with no visible sign of what caused the delay. They are experiencing the "memory" of an ancient fender bender.

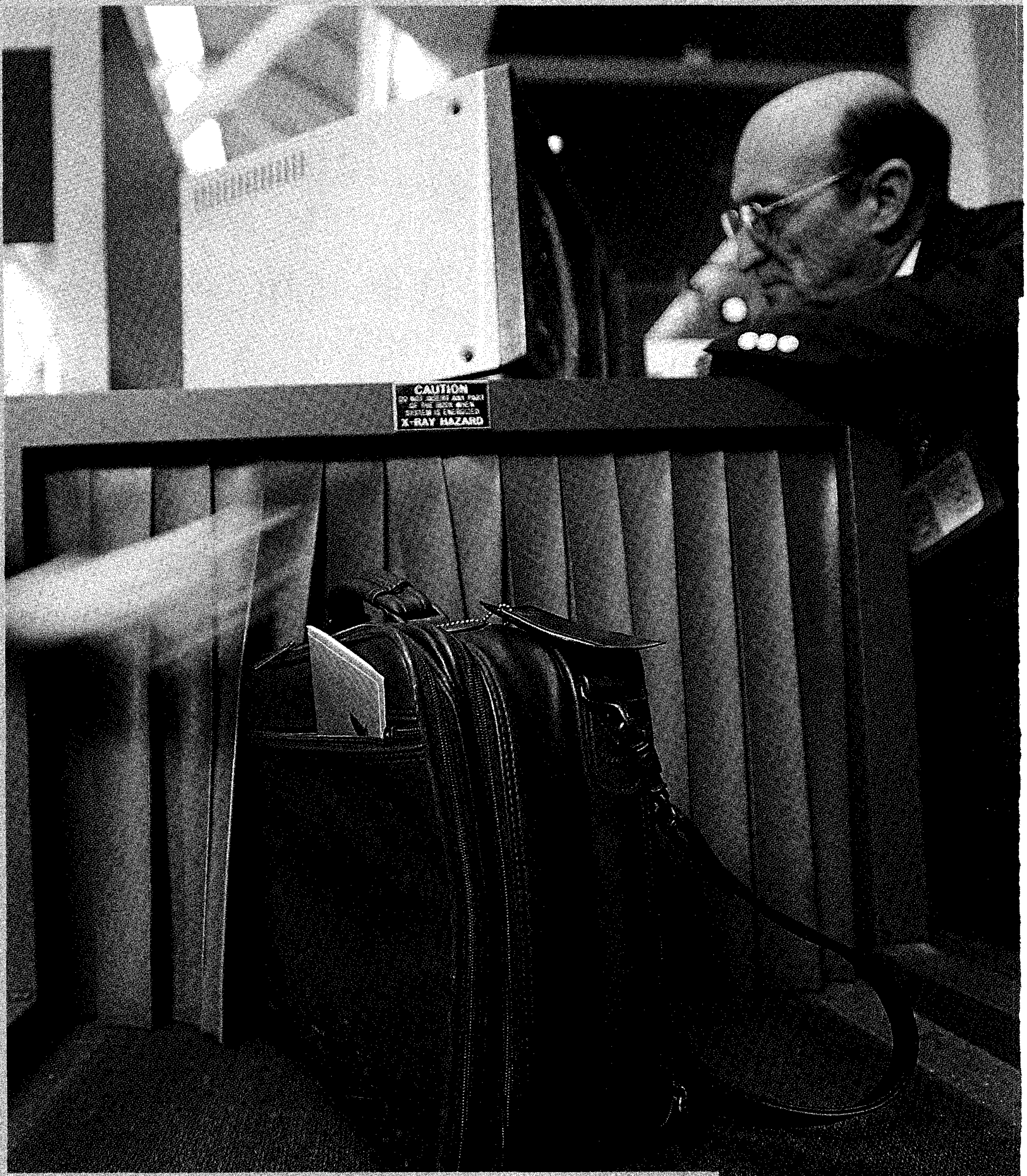
The funny part of this development is that, as traffic gets slower and slower, cars are being manufactured to go faster and faster. For example, the sport-utility vehicle, symbol of our times, was originally advertised as a mighty off-road machine, shown plowing through underbrush and bounding across rocky streams, or roaring up the sides of buttes (or mesas, or whatever they are) in the Arizona desert. You watched those commercials, and you wondered whether you knew anyone whose idea of recreation was to drive a car up a mountain. You decided, probably, that you did not. So why were people buying these things? The answer, it turns out, is that the S.U.V. proves to be the ideal vehicle not for bombing around the open countryside, terrifying poor woodland creatures and generally polluting the landscape for everyone else (delightful as that would be), but for the essentially opposite purpose of sitting in traffic. Perched high above the baking asphalt, six CDs in the changer and a video playing in the back seat, laptop plugged into the dashboard, cell phone in continual operation, entire families creep along the slow-moving conveyor belts that America's highways have become, cool and serene, in what amounts to a den on wheels. A machine engineered to get you there fast, and with a bullet, is used mainly for the mundane domestic chore of ferrying children and household pets through endless iterations of stop and go. A barge would move as quickly.



As it is with driving, so it is with most aspects of contemporary existence, and life during vacation time has become nearly as congested as life during work time. You get to the beach and you sit in a line of cars, waiting for a space to open up in the parking lot. You slog hundreds of yards through the hot sand to find an open space to spread out your towels, and some other family comes along and spreads out its towels right in front of you. You stand in line for tickets, rides, hot dogs, rest rooms. Congestion is the expected condition of everything.

There is an attitude, widely adopted, for coping with this condition. The attitude is: Other people do not exist. The family that spreads out its towels in front of yours acts as though there were nothing but empty beach where you are sitting. Cars bunch up along the highway, maneuvering in and out of each other's lanes, without their drivers ever making eye contact. People chatter away on their cell phones in front of strangers as if they were alone in their kitchens. Americans now behave in public places the way New Yorkers have always behaved in the subway: they carefully keep one inch of space between themselves and all adjacent bodies, and stare blankly into the

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL



FORD MOTOR COMPANY was looking to give its 250,000 employees easier access to core processes from wherever they happen to be. Using enterprise software from Microsoft, including Windows® 2000 Server, SQL Server,™ Exchange Server, and Office, Ford deployed a solution that helps users connect quickly to information and services on 1,000 intranet sites from anywhere in the world, so they can support customers and securely collaborate with their colleagues regardless of location.

© 2001 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft and Windows are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

This computer is traveling to Dubai.

Unlike its owner, the computer will never be homesick.

Enterprise software from Microsoft lets you bring the office with you. Connecting a mobile workforce with corporate headquarters is easier said than done. Of course, that's where Microsoft® software can help. We're not talking about people merely getting e-mail. This is software built for the Internet, allowing you to manage core processes—such as analyzing sales forecasts, leveraging customer information, or managing inventory—while on the go. The "office" will never be the same. Visit microsoft.com/business **Software for the Agile Business.**

Microsoft®

middle distance. If someone spoke to them, they would jump out of their shoes. The more crowded life gets, the more insulated people make themselves, as though they were travelling around in invisible S.U.V.s. Try glaring with annoyance at someone who is talking on a cell phone. He does not see you. You do not exist.

This is actually not as unnatural a response to life in an overcrowded world as it seems. For sociability has an inverse relation to density. It is a law of airline travel, for instance, that two passengers separated by an empty seat will get into a conversation, but three passengers packed in a single row will not say a word to one another for the whole flight. Back when most country roads were almost deserted, drivers waved at each other when they passed. Once there were more cars, the waving stopped. If there's one other person at the lunch counter, it's rude not to say hello. If there are thirty, you don't feel obliged to speak to any of them.

It's easy to contrast the old Gemeinschaft, when we waved merrily at utter strangers on a back road, with the new Gesellschaft, where monads circulate in a culture of total disconnection, and to deplore the change. Really, though, was it so great having to wave to that guy in the pickup? Wasn't there something fake and, ultimately, coercive about the old sociability? Companionship is one of the pleasures of life, but anonymity is another. People used to travel hundreds of miles into the wilderness to achieve the sweet feeling of isolation; today, there are six Winnebagos already there when you arrive.

The best place to experience anonymity, in fact, is in the middle of a big city. (This is why New Yorkers have no trouble understanding how their mayor and his estranged wife can live in the same house and never have anything to do with each other. It's just like riding the subway.) The aggravation of big-city life is enormous, but you at least have the satisfaction of knowing that no one cares a thing about you. All those other people may as well be trees. In a report on the horrors of modern traffic, published this spring in *U.S. News & World Report*, one Rod Moraga, of Boulder, Colorado, described finding himself in a traffic jam just a few hundred yards from the Continental Divide. "It takes away from the experience," he complained. "You're stressed out, uptight, and it takes longer to enjoy yourself. It's like New York." Indeed it is. Better get used to it.

—*Louis Menand*

SMOKE-FILLED ROOMS

LI'L LIBERALS

On a recent Sunday evening, the officers of the highly partisan political organization known as D-PAK convened in the kitchen of one of its board members, in Greenwich Village. But before the meeting began Kate Weinreich, the group's vice-president, had a grievance. "Don't make me sit next to *him!*" she shouted, pointing to Gabriel Panek, the treasurer. So Elly Brinkley, the president, graciously agreed to swap seats, pushing her plate of pizza and potato chips across the kitchen table.

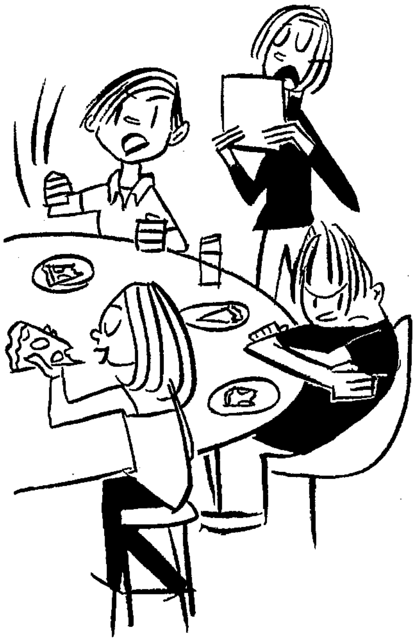
All five officers of D-PAK are ten years old and have just completed the fourth grade at Dalton. They founded D-PAK (which stands for Democratic Politically Active Kids) in January, after a teacher scolded them for talking politics in class. Their mission, according to D-PAK's media kit, is to "try to work against Bush's bad policies," and to "turn kids' Republican views into Democratic ones." To accomplish this, they meet for two hours every five weeks. This was D-PAK's last meeting of the school year.

Before each meeting, Brinkley, who has a mess of curly black hair bunched into a yellow scrunchy and a tiny set of braces on tiny teeth, types up an agenda, which the girls make sure the boys adhere to. This time, as per the agenda, Brinkley began the proceedings by delivering a report on education policy.

"I would like to interrupt for ten seconds to say three Bush quotes," Joshua Revesz said. " 'It's clearly the budget, it's got lots of numbers.' 'They've misunderestimated me.' " Here Revesz paused and looked up at the ceiling. "And I forgot the third."

Sarah Gitlin, the editor and publisher of D-PAK's newsletter, *The Young Politician's News*, took a swig from her glass of milk and stood up. She had written about twenty editorials, including a stinging rebuke of the United States' policy in Macedonia and a review of the estate tax. Now she read one of them aloud: " 'In March 2001, George Bush decided just out of the blue that he did not like his previous stand, and that he was going to reverse what he had promised in his campaign, and that he was not going to have a mandatory reduction of carbon-dioxide emission. . . . So, Bush, this is all I have to say: you are a *Liar, liar, pants on fire!*' "

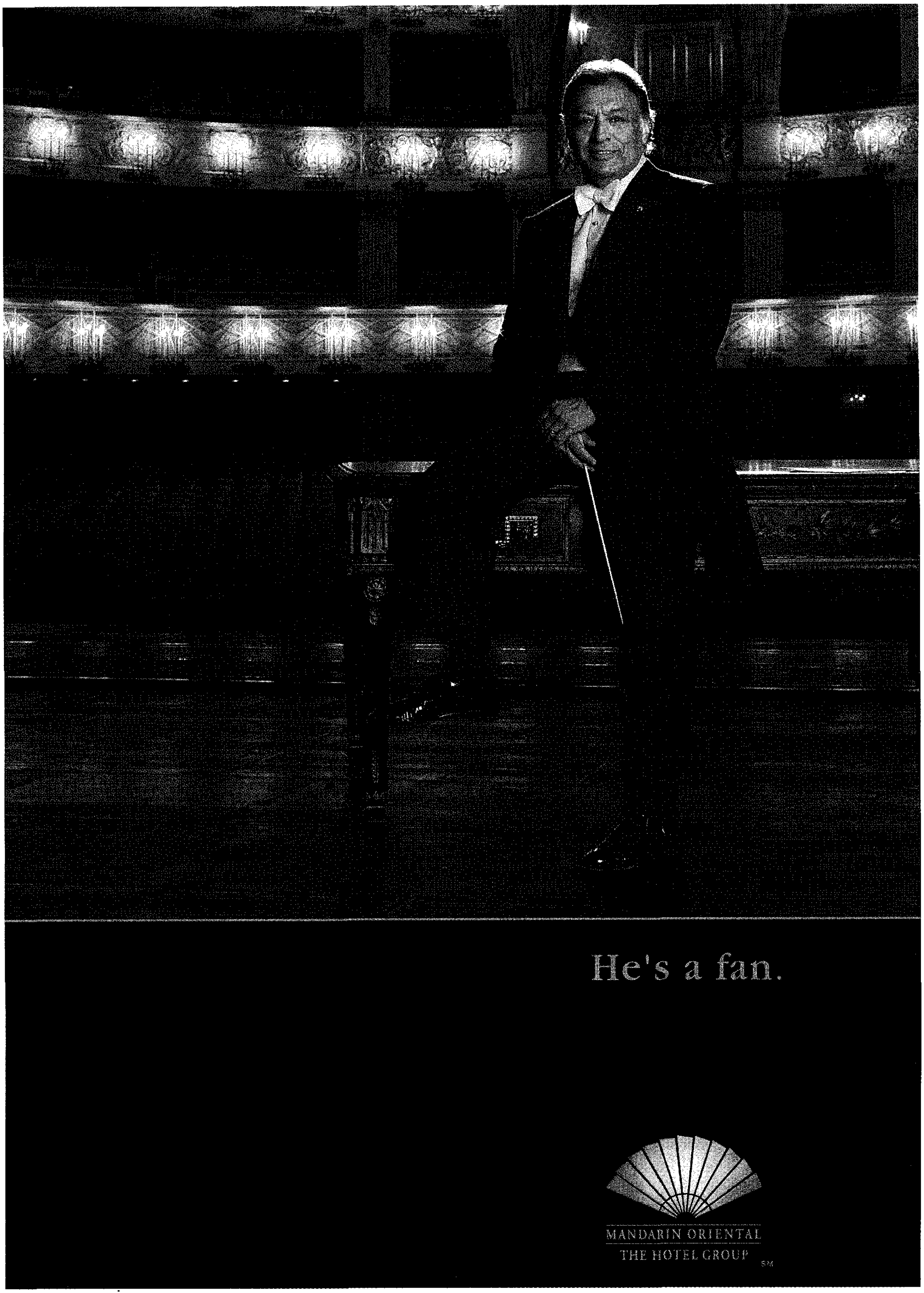
Next, Panek, lanky and tidy in a red polo shirt, rose to deliver the treasury report. He had determined that D-PAK possessed "thirty-something" dollars. "I don't even know where the money is," Panek said, with a hint of embarrassment. "It's somewhere in my room."



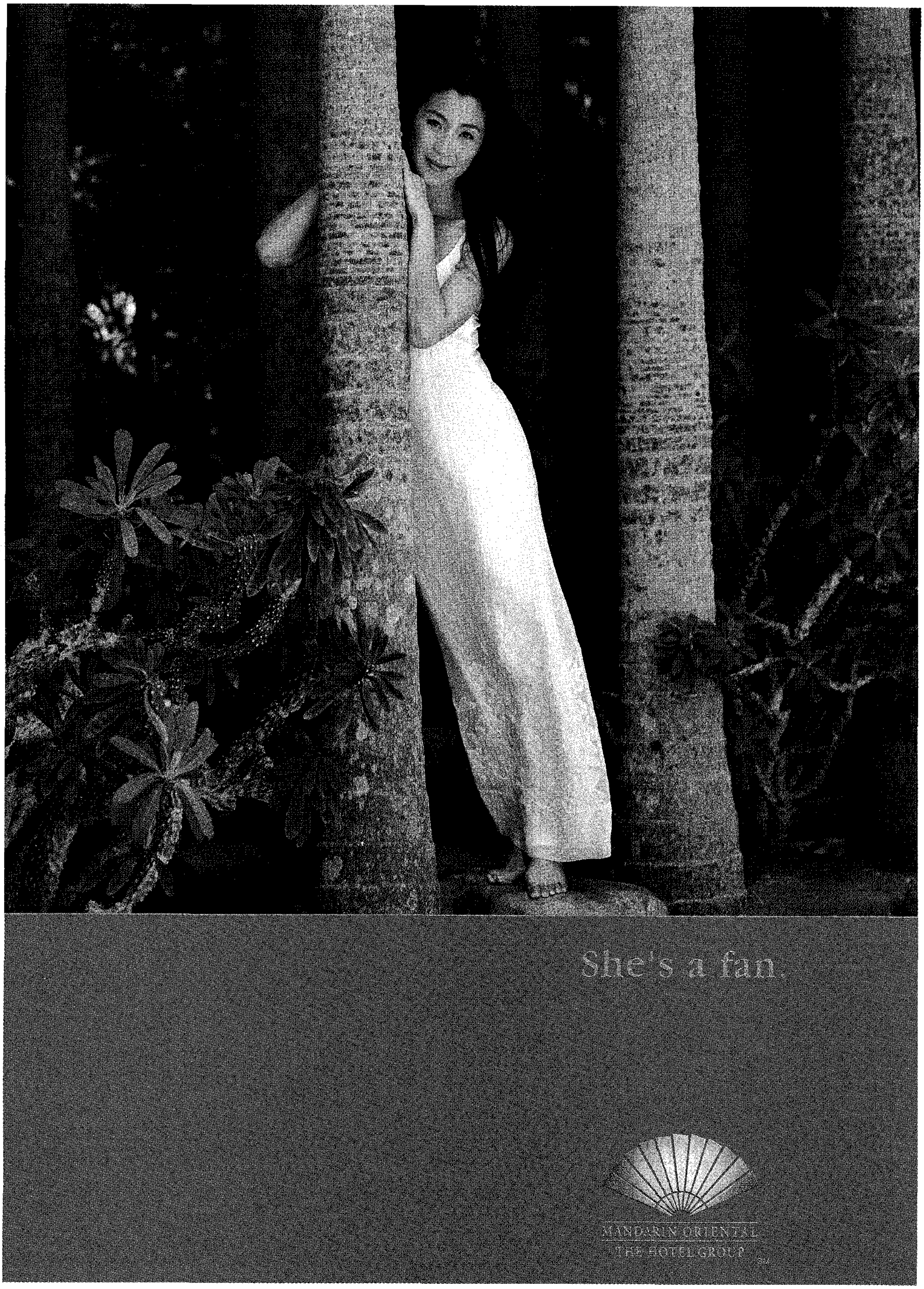
Dalton politicos

Before the meeting, the officers had polled their classmates on policy concerns. (Seven other Daltonians are nominal D-PAK members, but they do not attend meetings.) Now Gitlin relayed the results; one girl, she announced, was worried about the environment. Revesz, D-PAK's "judge," rapped his gavel (a yellow Magic Marker, actually) hard on the kitchen table. "I object to her being a member!" he declared.

"By our bylaws, anyone who's a Democrat who's under eighteen can join," Gitlin said. Revesz sat back, defeated. Weinreich held a slice of pizza up to her face and chewed off the cheese.


He's a fan.
MANDARIN ORIENTAL
THE HOTEL GROUP
SM

Find out why Zubin Mehta is a fan at www.mandarinoriental.com **ASIA-PACIFIC** • BANGKOK • THE HIMALAYAS • HONG KONG • JAKARTA KUALA LUMPUR • MACAU • MANILA • SINGAPORE • SURABAYA **EUROPE** • GENEVA • LONDON • MUNICH **USA** • HAWAII • MIAMI • NEW YORK • SAN FRANCISCO


She's a fan.
MANDARIN ORIENTAL
THE HOTEL GROUP

Find out why Michelle Yeoh is a fan at www.mandarinoriental.com **ASIA-PACIFIC** • BANGKOK • THE HIMALAYAS • HONG KONG • JAKARTA KUALA LUMPUR • MACAU • MANILA • SINGAPORE • SURABAYA **EUROPE** • GENEVA • LONDON • MUNICH **USA** • HAWAII • MIAMI • NEW YORK • SAN FRANCISCO

It was time to dispense chairmanships. Panek got health care, Gitlin took on "capital punishment slash the death penalty," Brinkley got education, and Weinreich chose the environment. That left Revesz.

"You can do tax," Gitlin said.

Revesz refused. "No one wants to do tax, because tax is a really boring thing," he said.

"Will you do transportation?" Brinkley asked, her feet not quite reaching the floor.

Revesz rolled his eyes. "I'll do First Amendment freedoms," he said.

D-PAK policy prohibits adults from attending D-PAK meetings—reporters excepted. But on this day the group had granted a special dispensation to Larry Kramer, the N.Y.U. law-school professor and former clerk to Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., because of the group's interest in his views on the Supreme Court's involvement in the 2000 Presidential election. Kramer waited outside the kitchen until the officers were ready for him. Finally, they invited him in and clapped as he took a seat at the table, between the two boys.

"Here's my take on the election, or, at least, the case," Kramer said. "The Supreme Court shouldn't have taken the case because there were all these laws that were in place to handle this." The group concurred, unanimously.

"We're basically Communists, because the government decided our President," Brinkley said. "So it's not really democratic."

"Good point," Panek said.

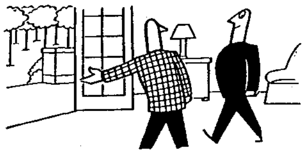
"They should have revoted the whole country," Weinreich said. Explaining that a revote would have been illegal, Kramer ran through the entire Florida election process, including the certification of the vote by the Florida Secretary of State, Katherine Harris. At the mention of her name, Panek stuck out his tongue.

After Kramer finished, the kids laid out a few more positions on various topics, including the President's daughters. "I think the press is being a little bit unfair," Revesz said. "I think they're trying to attack Bush by attacking his daughters."

Gitlin shrugged and said, "That's the way Washington goes."

—*Katherine Rosman*

DEPT. OF HOUSING
HOW TO BE A BROKER TO THE STARS

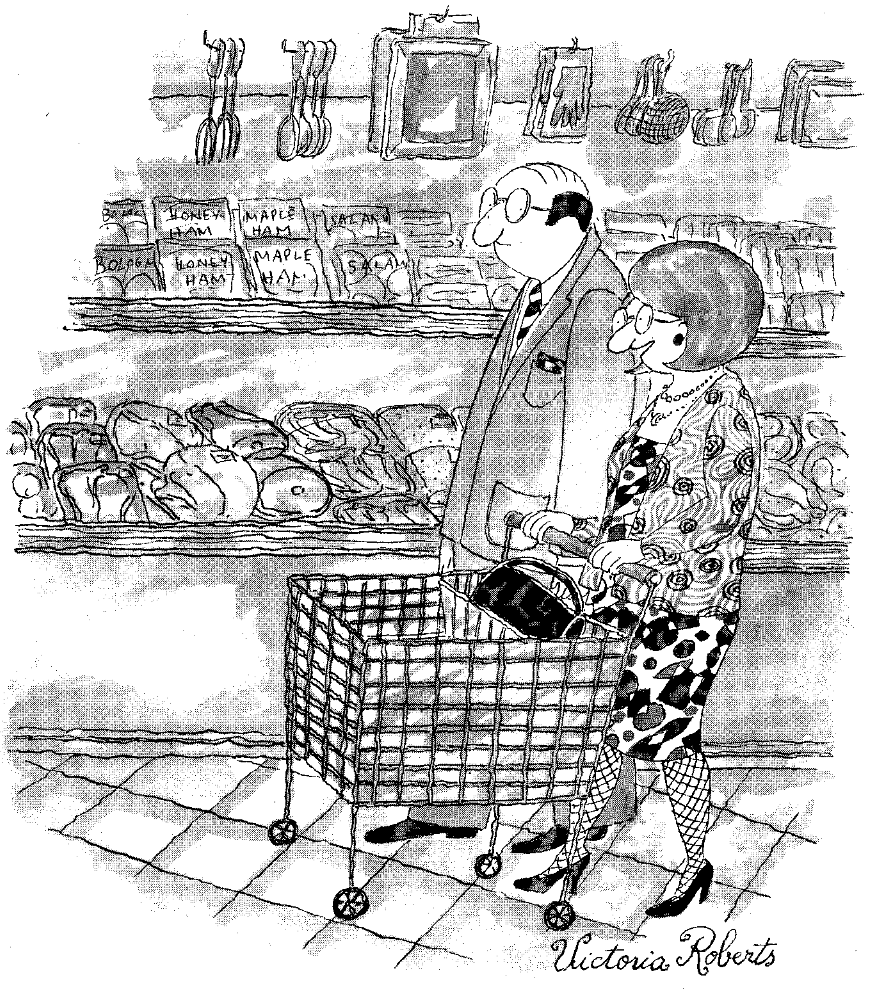


June Azoulay, a psychotherapist who is an expert in the family dynamics of the super-rich, came to the SoHo headquarters of the real-estate company the Corcoran Group last week to give advice that every broker hopes one day to need: how to sell homes to celebrities.

Barbara Corcoran, whose short blond hair and bright-colored suits have become trademarks of her own celebrity within the world of Manhattan real estate, explained that Azoulay is married to George Kalinsky, the official photographer for Madison Square Garden. Celebrities, Corcoran said, are the medium in which Azoulay lives. Azoulay, who has ash-blond plumage and was wearing an Armani pants suit and pinkish-gold nail polish, nodded modestly. The assembled sales staff, who were gathered around the company Ping-Pong table with notebooks and Hamptons tans, looked on with approval.

Azoulay began with a rhetorical question: "Are celebrities different?" Posters of Britney Spears and Madonna, two of Corcoran's clients, made answering that question a little easier. Celebrities are more airbrushed than regular people; they also need apartments in which they will be comfortable curling up provocatively on their couches while wearing knee-high red boots, and where they can descend to the lobby wearing a Stetson without drawing stares from the couple in 14-F.

Celebrities, Azoulay revealed, *are* different, and she explained what they do not need from their real-estate professional. "They do not need another fan; they do not need a friend; they do not need a gossip pipeline; they do not need another person to control their lives," she said, writing key words on a flip chart as



"Let's eat a whole lot of meat until we can't."

the members of her audience wrote key words in their notebooks. "What they do need is a little bit of recognition. You don't want to fawn all over them, but you do want to do your homework." If, for example, Warren Beatty had been your client a year and a half ago, she said, you would have done your research and discovered that he had an interest in politics. "You could say, 'I read your concerns about campaign finance, and I thought they were very interesting,'" Azoulay suggested. "But you do it in a professional, couth way. You don't kowtow."

At the core of Azoulay's presentation was a distinction between two fundamental personality types: the extrovert and the introvert. "One is not better than the other—they are just different, like being left-handed or right-handed," she said. "And that is how you come into the world, according to Carl Jung." Many celebrities are introverts, she said, but their apparent lack of enthusiasm for an apartment should not be interpreted as lack of interest. "You should mirror back to them; encourage the introvert to respond, and give them time to reply," she said. "They need space. You cannot invade. You *should* not invade." Barbara Corcoran admitted that when she worked with Janet Jackson she failed to recognize Jackson's introverted nature. "She picked me up in an armored vehicle, with her boyfriend, two brothers, a bodyguard, and a huge dog," Corcoran recalled. "I was starstruck." Instead of understanding that Jackson needed time alone with her entourage to think about her housing options, Corcoran blitzed her with a sales pitch. "I didn't get her confidence," she said. (Eventually, Corcoran ingratiated herself by buying pizza for the entourage, but even then Jackson didn't buy an apartment.)

Azoulay talked about dealing with a celebrity's manager—"Sometimes there is a power play between the celebrity and his advisers, and you don't know who to pitch," she warned—and she also addressed a matter that was surely a concern for those Corcoran brokers who have, in recent years, sold apartments to Pamela Anderson and Sean Combs: presenting a celebrity to a co-op board. "Tell the client that less is more: less jewelry, less makeup, less pizzazz," Azoulay said. As the seminar ended, Barbara Corcoran added her own observation on dealing with snooty boards, reminding her employees that finding a home for celebrities can be a positive experience for all concerned, not just those who earn a commission on sales. "The boards don't want the security, the paparazzi, the fans," she said. "But what they love is setting a new record in the sale price."

—*Rebecca Mead*

FLIMFLAM DEPT.
A WOULD-BE ROCKEFELLER RESPONDS TO THE CRITICS

Last week, Christopher Rocancourt called (collect) from a jail in Vancouver, British Columbia. Rocancourt, you may recall, is the supposed con artist who has been accused of bilking numerous gullible souls in the Hamptons of hundreds of thousands of dollars by impersonating a wealthy Rockefeller heir (from the French side of the family, of course). After he was arrested in East Hampton last summer (for failing to pay a bed-and-breakfast bill), he jumped bail and did not turn up again until April, when he was apprehended in Canada and charged with fraud and sexual assault. Two weeks ago, a U.S. attorney indicted him for fraud.

Rocancourt, however, is no ordinary mountebank. He is also, like most people these days, a media critic. If every good journalist is a bit of a con man, then perhaps every good con man knows a thing or two about being a journalist. Over the telephone last week, he said, "My concern is how accurate the news will be, how the journalist does his work." He has a thick French accent, like a jailhouse Pepe Le Pew. "I have a big thing about people who do a job to have integrity of self." A few weeks ago, Rocancourt wrote down his criticisms of the media's treatment of him in a letter to "60 Minutes," after sitting for an interview with Steve Kroft for an upcoming episode. The letter consisted of four handwritten pages.

"Like a specimen under a microscope, I have become the subject swab of a vast multimedia experiment," he wrote from his cell. "Journalists from around the world put on the white lab coats with great enthusiasm. . . . How professional were their actions? Let me critique their diagnosis."

The first to be evaluated was Bryan Burrough, whose long story about Rocancourt ran in the January issue of *Vanity Fair*. "Dr. Burrough has demonstrated himself as the scientist completely void of any journalistic deontology," Rocancourt concluded.

Next up was the New York *Post*. Of the *Post* reporter (Al Guart) who linked him to a stuntman from "The Sopranos," Rocancourt wrote, "This scientist-clad journalist represents the mediocrity of the professional. He must have slept through writing 101. . . . A saying in French that parallels this writing in English is 'A garbage can full of words good to mop the floor.'"

How about the television news magazine "Extra"? "Bottom of the Barrel. Weakest of the Weak. Tabloid journalism to feed wolves. An insult to human intelligence. Excellent lies derived from misleading information. *Voilà!* Bravo! 'Extra' is the king of 6#??&@#!!"

For other media outlets, he had kinder words. Of "The Millionaire Playboy," an hour-long segment about him on "Dateline NBC," he said, "A good seller. Credit is due to the revelation of the truth regarding my childhood and parents. From my perspective, that truth got mixed up with a bit too much drama. Repetitive passing shots of champagne and a passport lead me to wonder if Mike Taibbi"—the correspondent—"drank too much Cristal?"

And although he approved of CNN ("the most impartial") and the *Times* (they "research the truth with concern and integrity. I thank them"), he reserved his highest praise for "60 Minutes" ("Intellect . . . quality . . . integrity . . . truth"), to which he decided, in the end, to grant an exclusive jailhouse interview. The screed ends with the bilingual declaration "*Dieu est mon droit* (God is my right)."

When he was asked on the telephone whether he had anything to add to his critique of the media, he paused and said, "It's all Hollywood." In the background, suddenly, sounds of a scuffle could be heard. "Lockdown, guys!" someone shouted. "I'll call you back," Rocancourt said, and hung up.

—*Nick Paumgarten*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE

A GOOD C.E.O. IS NOT HARD TO FIND

The chief executives of large American corporations are, as a class, the most overpaid people on the planet. In the last year, stocks have plummeted and corporate profits have vanished, yet the average C.E.O. still earns millions of dollars in salary and bonus and tens of millions more in stock options. It's hard to find anyone, with the possible exception of the top dogs themselves, who will justify what *Fortune* recently called "the great C.E.O. pay heist," and just as hard to find anyone who knows what to do about it. People tend to blame these outlandish salaries on stock-option accounting or the cozy relationships between top executives and their boards of directors, but the hidden culprit is the pervasive yet misguided notion that there is a shortage of C.E.O.-calibre talent in the world.

The people charged with hiring C.E.O.s think there aren't enough good ones to go around. If you manage to find a winning general, you pay up—way up—to get him. When the demand is so high and the supply seems so low, a guy like Joseph Nacchio, the C.E.O. of Qwest Communications, can earn a hundred million dollars. The problem is, this equation is out of whack. Sure, the demand half holds true. Since 1995, according to one study, two-thirds of large corporations have replaced their C.E.O.s. But the supply is not low. It only seems so, because of what the corporate hiring culture looks for in a C.E.O.

The typical board of directors hunting for a C.E.O. operates under the dictum "Only superheroes need apply." By superhero the board means a polished veteran who has occupied many an executive suite, if not the cover of *Forbes*. Promising young hot shots don't rate. You might expect that at a time of rapid technological change struggling companies would prefer new blood to a brand name, especially when brand names cost so much. But a recent study by the Harvard Business School professor Rakesh Khurana, the author of a forthcoming book on C.E.O. searches, found that when these companies go looking for a new C.E.O. they rarely consider anyone who isn't already the C.E.O. or president of a high-performing, high-profile company. (It also helps if you're a tall Wasp with fabulous hair.) In other words, companies set up criteria that only a few people can meet and then complain that there aren't enough people who fit those criteria.

This kind of filtering process would make sense if it worked. But it doesn't. It puts a premium on ticket-punching, instead of on initiative. Bill Gates, Michael Dell, and even Jack Welch would probably never have become C.E.O.s if they'd had to jump through these job-hunt hoops. By comparison, in recent years some perfect candidates—regular Prince Valiants, according to Khurana's formula—have presided over some spectacular meltdowns. C. Michael Armstrong was the well-regarded C.E.O. of a high-flying, high-profile company (Hughes Electronics) when A.T. & T. came calling; George Fisher ran Motorola before he left for Kodak; and who can forget "Chainsaw" Al Dunlap's stint at Sunbeam? In all three cases, it's hard to say which suffered more, the company or the C.E.O.'s reputation.

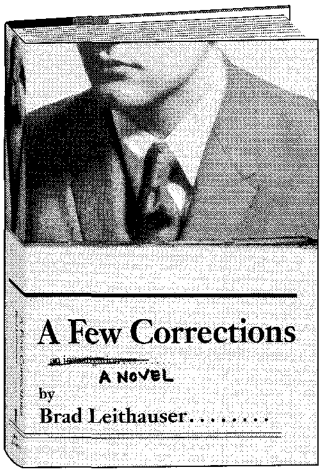
Companies that are fixated on fancy résumés often overlook their own homegrown talent, even though homegrown talent has a splendid track record. As a result, they end up with a celebrity in charge, rather than someone who is intimately familiar with the business at hand. Leadership doesn't travel as well as headhunters and corporate hagiographers would have us believe. The supermanager, able to leap from industry to industry in a single bound, is, for the most part, the stuff of myth. Just because you know how to sell soda doesn't mean you can sell software. In fact, reams of academic research suggest that, with rare exceptions, the same rule applies to C.E.O.s as to mutual-fund managers: past performance is no predictor of future results. Yet companies throw away millions of dollars on the assumption that it is.

So why hire a celebrity C.E.O.? It allows a board of directors to cover its ass. If things go wrong, at least the board can say they went wrong with the right guy. Fear rules—right alongside greed, of course, since everyone involved in the great C.E.O. job hunt has an interest in fostering the talent-shortage myth. The new hires get hefty pay packages and staggering golden parachutes. The directors who do the hiring see their own job-market value rise, because so many of them are C.E.O.s themselves. And the headhunters, who are now called in on almost every major executive search, feed on the crumbs. Between 1987 and 2000, revenues at executive-search firms jumped from two billion dollars to ten billion. If people didn't think talent was hard to find, they wouldn't pay others so much to find it for them.

The shareholders suffer, but they aren't the only losers. The C.E.O.s themselves can get hurt. The more they get paid, the more is expected of them, and the more likely they are to disappoint. So they get fired, early and often. According to Khurana, C.E.O.s are three times as likely to get canned today as they were fifteen years ago. (Of course, a few million options help soften the blow.)

Companies expect, and seek, more than anyone can deliver. When the time comes to fill the top spot, they instinctively look for Superman, but that mild-mannered senior vice-president, who has spent more time on the factory floor than on CNBC (and can still break eighty), may be all the hero they need. You'd be surprised how many people can look heroic when they put on a cape.

—*James Surowiecki*



Brad Leithauser's

"genuinely funny,[1] elegant,[2] elegiac[1]" new novel opens with a 250-word OBITUARY

of a presumably ordinary midwestern salesman—and proceeds, chapter by chapter, to make a few (surprising) corrections.

"It's a delight to see Leithauser at work, like watching someone make an origami swan."
—Steven Moore, Wash. Post

"A pleasure to read"
—Merle Rubin, L.A. Times

"Clever & engaging"
—Ann Beattie

"Masterful... A smart, moving, fully realized novel."—Porter Shreve, Chicago Tribune

[1] **"Genuinely funny,** quietly elegiac." —Kirkus

"Always humane and intriguing"
—Tony Mastrogiorgio, San Francisco Chronicle

[2] **"Elegant...Shot through with sparks of light"**
—David Rakoff, Baltimore Sun

Knopf
www.aaknopf.com

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

TESTING LIMITS

Can the President's education crusade survive Beltway politics?

BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

Sandy Kress is on temporary assignment as the White House's chief lobbyist on education. He's really a lawyer in Austin, and since Inauguration Day he has been spending weeks in Washington and weekends back home. One weekend, he rummaged around in his desk and found a notebook he'd bought in the summer of 1999, which he brought to Washington to show me. It is a flimsy little drugstore notebook, green, maybe four by six inches. Inside, Kress had written, two years ago, "A Draft Position for George W. Bush on K-12 Education," and, under that legend, a mad scrawl fills the whole book.

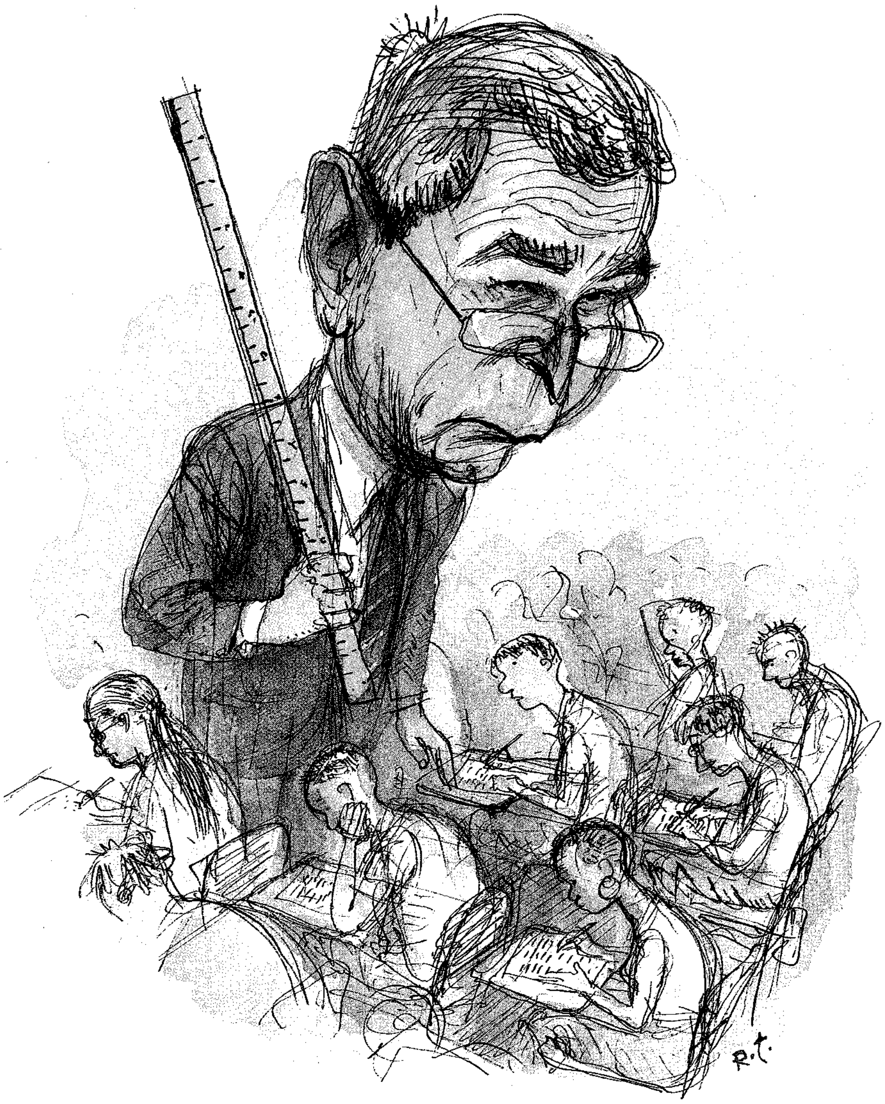
"Unhappily, after spending billions and billions of dollars on education, the federal government has made virtually no meaningful difference in helping educate our children," Kress wrote. "As a result of this cynical, shameful, and wasteful behavior, other politicians have decided that there should be no federal role in education at all." This was going to change when Bush became President: "Our citizenry, which regularly says that education is the nation's most important cause, needs to understand the sharp contrast between Governor Bush's vigor and the utter sloppiness of the keepers of the status quo."

The Bush campaign, at least in the inner circle, had the feeling of a crusade. Part of it was restorationist sentiment, and part was Texas chauvinism and a concomitant dislike of Eastern liberals—but, to the extent that the crusade was about a specific government policy, it was education reform. In 1999, Bush people talked about tax cuts a bit dutifully, but they talked about education with real passion. Governor Bush's proudest accomplishment, by far, was education reform. It was the one area where he showed a Clinton-style proclivity to discuss the details of programs, and the best example of his ability to govern in a bipartisan way. Sandy Kress, a former president of the Dallas School Board and one of the architects of the Texas education reforms, is a Democrat, but he and Bush had been working together successfully for years.

As President, Bush would take the Texas reforms national, and so actually accomplish something, instead of shilly-shallying around, the way the last few Presidents had (including his father, who declared himself the "education President" but didn't pass any major legislation). Kress wrote in the notebook, "No magic bullets. No press events every three or four months to announce a few new federal education programs to show he 'cares' about education. No 'accountability proposals' without accountability. Just an experienced, steady, capable, and ongoing effort to match the quality and, even more, the effectiveness of the federal effort to the noble cause it serves."

In a little over a month, Congress will go on its August recess, which means that the part of a new Presidency in which it is easiest to make dramatic changes will be over. During his opening run, Bush will have passed two major initiatives, the tax cut and education reform. The tax cut, in a sense, is a negative achievement: a diminution in government revenues that will lead to a diminution in government action. The education bill is affirmative. It will directly affect the lives of tens of millions of people—soon. Especially now that the Republicans have lost their Senate majority, education is likely to be the first and the last of the big Bush programs.

Sandy Kress's notebook lays out the essentials of the Texas education reform. The state adopted standards—sets of basic knowledge and skills that all students in public school are supposed to master—and then wrote tests based on those standards. Students in most grades were tested every year. The material on the tests fell well within the bounds of basic, non-tricky stuff that you'd want your kids to know. (For example, a question on a fifth-grade math test shows a rectangular flag, gives the measurements of the sides, and asks what the perimeter is.) The scores were published, and sent to parents, and used to rate the performance of schools. What's more, every school was rated not just on the performance of its student body as a whole but also on the performance of its African-American and Latino and poor students specifically. ("Disaggregation" is the jargon for this.) If a school didn't raise the test scores of its black students, it was put into receivership: new curriculum, new teachers, new principal. To protect itself from the temptation of writing meaningless tests that everybody would pass, Texas also used an independent national test as a benchmark. And, sure enough, since the system was put in place, the performance of Texas students, including minority students, has risen steadily, on both the state tests and, in most subjects, on the national one, too. This was what lay behind Bush's education slogans, the promise to "leave no child behind" and to eschew "the soft bigotry of low expectations." (It's also what gave substance to his broader slogan, "compassionate conservatism.") Unlike previous Presidents, he would deliver a real education for the worst-off American kids.



"For it to work out now, he cannot go squishy," a congressman said of Bush and his plan.

RICHARD THOMPSON

Education was the issue that made Bush President. The movement for educational standards has been a growing force in American politics for the better part of two decades. The standards movement started in the South and wound up propelling several Southern governors, including Bill Clinton and Bush, into national politics. (Bush was not the first standards-embracing governor of Texas; the basic system was enacted under his Democratic predecessor, Ann Richards.) The South, as America's Third World, was the first part of the country to realize that economic development requires better public schools. But by the end of the century, just about every state's governor had come around, and had launched a standards program. The politics of the standards movement are especially propitious for Republicans, because at least some of their interest groups are much more enthusiastic about it than the Democrats' interest groups are. Businesses see educational standards as a way to insure a supply of better workers. Teachers' unions and minority organizations worry that all the new tests (tests are an inevitable part of every standards regime) will be used to declare black and brown kids, and their teachers, to be subpar. So standards present Republicans with an opportunity to steal middle-class suburban voters—who overwhelmingly send their kids to public school and who think of a good education as the best way to guarantee their economic future—from the Democrats.

Standards were also a way for Bush to promote the Republican view of life, in which discipline and toughness produce better results than misty-eyed understanding. Liberals always accuse conservatives of being uncaring; Bush was saying, in effect, I'll show you who's uncaring: liberals think they're giving poor kids a progressive education and protecting them from the harsh negative judgment of standardized tests, but they're actually consigning them to poverty by sending them out into the world not knowing how to read or figure. Much of what deep-seated pain and cynicism there is in American life comes from the persistence of low academic performance by minority students, despite decades of efforts to do something about it. Bush would claim that Texas was working on a solution to the problem.

During the Presidential campaign, Al Gore usually spoke about education in a strained, careful voice, obviously trying to find a way to support standards without alienating his constituency. One of Bush's cleanest scores in the debates came when he said, repeatedly, that he

MARISA ACOCELLA

"Fabien and I have been dating for two seasons."

• •

was going to test students every year in reading and math, and Gore didn't say whether he thought that was a good idea. In the early stages of the Presidential campaign, I watched Gore, in Dallas, make a speech on education to a group of African-American mayors, in which he tried, without much evident conviction, to cast Bush's record on education in a bad light. Sandy Kress was there to run an after-the-speech spin room for the Bush campaign, which entailed publicly opposing the Presidential candidate of his own party. The intense loyalty of Bush's close aides can be startling—is there something there that they see and we don't, or do we see Bush more clearly from a distance than they do up close? In one of my conversations with Kress, when he was talking about an early Bush maneuver on behalf of the bill—nothing terribly unusual, just chatting up some members of Congress—a wave of emotion came over him and, with a murmured apology, he started to cry.

With the fervor of true believers, Kress and his partner in the White House, Margaret La Montagne, the head of domestic policy and formerly Bush's education adviser in Austin, wanted two things: education reform on the Texas model and a big win for their boss. They've got the big win—the most significant piece of federal education legislation since at least 1965. But whether they've also achieved education reform of the kind they got in Texas is not at all certain. A great deal depends on what Bush does this month, when nobody's looking.

On the day after the House of Representatives passed the education bill, by a vote of 384 to 45, I went to see George Miller, of California, the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Having spent half a year covering the Bush Administration, I found it jarring to enter what was obviously the lair of a liberal. There were no portraits of Friedrich von Hayek or Winston Churchill on the walls; instead, there were books by Jonathan Kozol, Barbara Ehrenreich, and Randall Robinson, posters commemorating the Mondale-Ferraro campaign and the struggle against the Contras, an old summer-camp trunk pressed into service as a coffee table. Miller is a big, muscular guy with a bristly white mustache. He was wearing a tie but no jacket, and his sleeves were rolled up to reveal giant forearms. He looked like the high-school history teacher who also coached the football team, and then got promoted to principal.

Several years ago, Miller went into what he calls "a slow burn" about educational standards and began pushing them in the House, with no success. He thought Bill Clinton had lost his old gubernatorial fire on standards during his Presidency, as he came to rely more heavily on the support of the traditional Democratic interest groups. In 1994, Miller proposed an amendment to an education bill that would have required teachers to have been certified in the subject they teach. It failed by a vote of 424 to 1, and Miller's office had to shut down its switchboard for three days; an orchestrated political telemarketing campaign by homeschoolers had flooded it with calls. In 1999, Miller wrote a bill proposing a major federal standards-and-teacher-quality program, but it never became law.

Last December, Bush held a meeting on education at the Texas governor's mansion, in Austin. "The New York *Times* asked somebody how come I wasn't invited," Miller told me. "So I got invited. It was a lunch. Everybody spoke about what they thought was possible. I spoke at the end. I said, 'I've been at this for twenty-six years. I went to Washington at twenty-nine.' Bush said, 'Hell, you should have met *me* at twenty-nine!' I said there's a reason for the federal role in education: to equalize the funding. You have to put in more money. You can't do it without money.

"We hit it off. We hit it off very well. We sat next to each other. He has"—

Miller chuckled helplessly—“a *very* relaxed manner. I was sitting next to him, and he was giving me a running commentary on what people were saying.” By the end of the meeting, Miller had acquired his official George W. Bush nickname, Big George, and Bush had acquired an important ally.

Around this point in our conversation, the phone in Miller’s office beeped. Miller’s press secretary picked it up. “The President is on the phone,” he said. Miller went into a small anteroom to take the call. Through the closed door, I could hear, periodically, his low, rumbling chuckle. After a few minutes, he came out with a big smile on his face. “Well!” he said. “He was nice enough to congratulate us for a good job.”

Bush’s relationship with Miller is a relatively rare example of a way of operating that was supposed to characterize his Presidency. He’d reach out to Democrats, he’d give them responsibility and credit, he’d compromise. Miller and the Republican chairman of his committee, John Boehner, of Ohio, were remarkably effective in steering the education bill through the House. Boehner had to defy the sentiment of his own party in dropping a provision that would have created federal education vouchers; Miller had to go against his party in keeping the feature that was most important to Bush, yearly testing. Still, they got the bill passed by a huge margin.

The Senate was trickier. In a departure from the usual protocol, the White House did not treat the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, James Jeffords, of Vermont, as the person in charge of the bill; his switching parties surely has something to do with the fact that he was not given control over the most important piece of legislation ever to move through the committee during his tenure as chairman. Instead, the White House treated a whole bunch of senators—including Ted Kennedy, of Massachusetts; Judd Gregg, of New Hampshire; Joseph Lieberman, of Connecticut; and Evan Bayh, of Indiana—as quasi-managers of the bill, with the result that all of them are bursting with parental pride, in amounts totalling more than a hundred per cent, and that the bill didn’t move along as quickly as it had in the House.

The last thing the White House wanted was a long, slow period of national debate in which the many interest groups involved in education could marshal lobbying campaigns. That was what had killed the equivalent initiative in the Clinton Administration, health-care reform. On the education bill, neither the House nor the Senate even held hearings. Still, in early spring, criticism of the bill began to appear, and to hold things up in the Senate. The most significant opposition from the White House’s perspective came from a group of Republican governors led by John Engler, of Michigan, who were worried that the bill would declare too many of the schools in their states to be falling below standards, and that they would be blamed for it.

As originally written, the bill would be brutal on schools that had low test scores. Every school would have just ten years to bring up to standards every subgroup, and the federal government would begin to require corrective action—new curriculum, new staff—after three years if it didn’t. (Texas law stipulates that students with unacceptably low scores not get promoted or graduate; in the federal bill, there are no consequences of bad scores for students, only for schools.) I went to see Engler not long ago, during one of his visits to Washington. “I think there will be tremendous pressure on schools,” he told me. “The bill said, All right, if only fifty per cent can do math, in ten years it has to be a hundred per cent. That’s five per cent better a year. If it was only twenty per cent who could do math, then they’d have to gain eight per cent a year. These are rates of annual progress heretofore unknown. Two things happen. One, you dumb the test down. Two, every school, even good schools, gets labelled nonperforming. So when this language emerged, drafted by the gnomes in the Congressional Research Service, or wherever they are, we said, ‘Folks, we’re not happy with what you’ve written.’ ” Engler’s cause got a boost when Jeffords’s staff director, Mark Powden, distributed a series of charts showing that the overwhelming majority of schools in several states—including Bush’s home

THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER—
NOW IN PAPERBACK

DRIVING
Mr. Albert

A Trip Across America with Einstein’s Brain

by MICHAEL PATERNITI

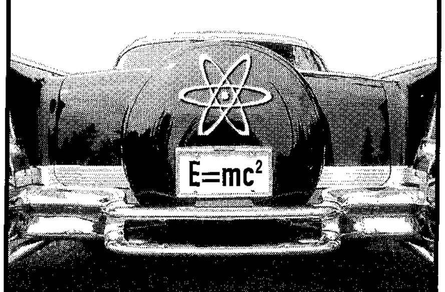
A True Story

“**Eccentric, hilarious, infuriating, and ultimately mesmerizing.**”
—*Washington Post Book World*

“Like the wild-haired physicist himself, [the book] is **simultaneously dead serious and inescapably funny.**”
—*The New York Times Book Review*

“**DRIVING MR. ALBERT is entertaining, absurd, real.**”
—*Boston Sunday Globe Books*

“Part travelogue, part biography ... **highly absorbing.**” —*Vanity Fair*



DTP
Trade Paperbacks
Available wherever paperbacks are sold
www.dialpress.com

THE
NEW YORKER
online
NOW AT
www.newyorker.com
© 2001 by The Condé Nast Publications Inc. All rights reserved

state, Texas, and Lieberman's home state, Connecticut—would be labelled low-performing under the bill.

Here is an odd thing about Washington. The education bill is hardly an arcane piece of legislation, like revisions in the capital-equipment-depreciation schedules or intercontinental-ballistic-missile basing. Ninety per cent of the schoolchildren in America are going to take the tests it requires. And yet, when it comes down to the crucial point in the negotiations, the community of people who know and care about what's going on with a bill like this is quite small—intimate, really. That's because Washington's master narrative—what gets talked about at parties and on television public-affairs shows—has to be kept simpler than any bill of this importance can ever be. To the extent that there was public discussion of the education bill outside the trade press, it was mainly about whether vouchers would be a part of it. The cognoscenti knew that vouchers had been dead from the beginning. Bush didn't push hard for them when he was governor of Texas, and he hinted broadly as early as the post-election meeting in Austin, and several times thereafter, that they were a weak preference for him. What he cared about, what the bill had to have, was testing for every student every year. Nonetheless, "Will there be vouchers?" was the official Washington question about the bill through the winter and spring.

Part of the fun of belonging to the cognoscenti is knowing what the real drama is. In late April and early May, the education insiders knew that the White House was getting hammered by the governors on the "A.Y.P. formula" (A.Y.P. stands for "adequate yearly progress"), and that was what everybody was E-mailing and voice-mailing everybody else about. One Saturday afternoon, word spread instantaneously within this group (while the world slumbered on): Sandy Kress had just rewritten the A.Y.P. formula.

Kress softened the strict Texas-style requirement—which sailed right through the House—that schools would be judged not on their over-all performance but on the progress made by each individual subgroup, including poor and black and Latino students. As the bill was originally written, if you taught your white kids algebra successfully but not your Mexican-American kids, the government would come and get you. What Kress did was to create a new measure of adequate yearly progress, in which every group would have to advance one per cent a year, but the over-all progress of the school would be gauged by a new statistic that would blend the groups' results into a single number. He retreated, in other words, from the majestic moral simplicity of the Texas system.

The Senate began to debate the bill. Then, a few weeks later, word spread again: at a meeting with groups that had been suspicious of the bill, such as the teachers' unions, Kress and the participants had mused together over the possibility of softening the A.Y.P. formula even further. He even discussed the idea of using a non-race-specific requirement that every school raise the performance of the bottom quarter of its students every year, and dropping the directive that all students be proficient by a particular date. In that case, "the soft bigotry of low expectations," to the extent that the phrase is meant to have a racial connotation, would live to see another day.

I asked Kress about all this, and it was clear that he'd got caught up in the classic reformer's dilemma of trying to find a position that was neither so workable as to be impure nor so pure as to be unworkable. It sounded as if he was no longer at all comfortable with the House version of the bill, but he called the language he'd written into the Senate bill "Rube Goldbergesque," and didn't seem comfortable with that, either. He was trying to find a way to make sure that the law would label only a small percentage of schools non-performing. "I worry about these arbitrary systems," he said. "If we create a system where some schools are very likely to fail, what teachers will go there? What principals? What about a school that's at forty per cent of proficiency and has to gain six per cent a year? Do you go there? You might say, 'I can get three per cent a year.' We reward those schools! To say that we're going to call it a failure if you fail for African-American kids

THE FLAMINGOS

Fragonard and his looking-glass worlds
could no more capture this red and white
than words can conjure the flesh of a lover:
so tender, soft and full of sleep . . .

They rise through green beds on their high pink stems,
swaying gently in full bloom: mesmeric,
self-mesmerized, till the scooped heads sink
and bury those white-rimmed eyes
with the other colors, black and red wing-
feathers hidden in their feathery sides.

A jealous screech shivers through the aviary
like shattering glass. They spread their wings,
surprised, and, one by one, each stretches, slowly,
and stalks away: striding into paradise.

—*Robin Robertson*

for one year, that we're going to put a big ol' badge on you—we just don't think that's the right way to go."

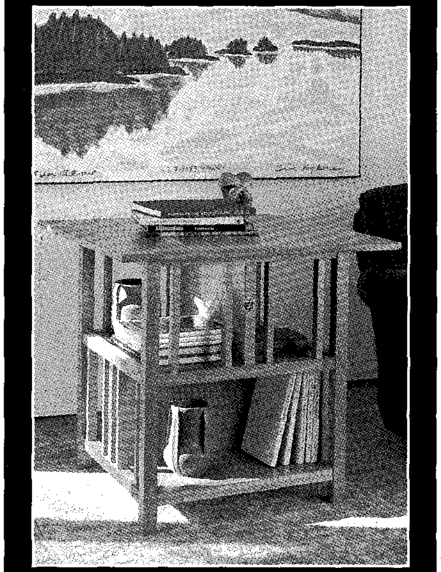
Kress did, however, vigorously insist that the White House will push as hard as it can for a law that requires progress by every subgroup every year, rather than one that allows schools to hide the low performance of their poor and minority students behind over-all averages. "We will *not*—we have been blood-committed to disaggregated data," he said. "Not only producing it, but using it. That's at the core of the President's views—lift *all* groups above the bar. We're *never* backing off of that. We will *never* side with a proposal that allows ranking based on how the whole student body is doing." So his marker is down.

The education bill now goes to conference, where the differences between the versions the House and the Senate passed will be resolved. Then both houses will pass identical versions and Bush will sign it into law. At the moment, two things are certain: Bush will have passed an important bill, and there will be a lot of new, federally required testing of American schoolchildren. (The commercial test-publishing industry, which will be called upon to produce many of these tests, is the one indisputable winner the bill has produced thus far.) Whatever else it accomplishes, the bill will be significant for substantially increasing federal control over what has long been the developed world's most localized education system.

So far, though, headlines about the bill, when they appear at all, tend to be along the lines of "HOUSE PASSES MAJOR OVERHAUL OF SCHOOLS." As soon as people figure out what the bill does, there will be caterwauling throughout the land. Teachers and principals will complain about having to submit their students to torturous drills, instead of true learning, to bring their scores up. Poor and minority districts will get the lowest scores and will complain that they're being anathematized. Rich districts will complain that teachers are "teaching to the test," that their children's education is being dumbed down. All of this has been going on at the state level ever since the standards movement got rolling, and now it will go on nationally.

But Bush is right that you can't figure out whether schools are doing a good job unless you have some way of measuring how much their students are learning. Go on the Web and read a Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test—are you really comfortable with kids' not knowing that material? Even in adequately funded schools with small class sizes, it isn't safe to assume, with no proof, that the students are learning. A guarantee by the national government

THOS. MOSER
CABINETMAKERS



Call toll-free to receive our catalog:
1-877-708-1973

Visit our new Charleston, SC showroom.

Charleston · Freeport, Maine · New York · San Francisco
www.thosmoser.com

NEW AUTHORS
PUBLISH YOUR WORK
ALL SUBJECTS CONSIDERED
WRITE OR SEND YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO:
MINERVA PRESS
315-317 REGENT ST. LONDON W1R 7YB. UK
www.minerva-press.co.uk

MIRIAM'S WELL *Presents*
DAVID WHYTE
August 10-12, 2001
THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE:
A Seminar on Life, Work and the Poetic Imagination
845 246.5805 www.miriamswell.com

Burgundy, France!
Antiquing
Biking, Cooking
Exquisite Estate
Custom Vacations
Wine Tours, Golf
Walking Tours
Luxury Barge
BurgundyWineHolidays.com
888-836-8895, 303-554-7075 www.burgundywineholidays.com

LONDON FLATS
PARIS PROPERTIES - COTSWOLD COTTAGES
Short Term - Privately owned
THE LONDON CONNECTION
TOLL FREE PHONE: 888-393-9120
FAX: 801-393-3024
WWW.LONDONCONNECTION.COM
E-MAIL: SALES@LCPM.NET
LONDON CONNECTION

of a decent education for every child is a noble cause, and so is the idea that all Americans will acquire a common body of skills and knowledge as they come of age. (Memo to Scarsdale, New York, where parents have been boycotting state tests: Your kids should learn that stuff, too, after which they can go back to being little geniuses.) Bush isn't inclined to put these tasks directly into the hands of the federal government, and even if he were it would be politically impossible right now. He has to rely on states and local districts, which have an immense capacity for screwing up. That is why the guidelines the federal government gives them now are so important.

How will Bush's education bill turn out? There are a number of ways it could turn out badly. The states could be free to give local districts so much latitude to pick tests that it would be impossible to tell whether students are really learning. Instead of a single trustworthy national benchmark to check against the use of junk tests, there could be several different benchmarks. Instead of using tests that measure mastery of curriculum, schools could choose vaguer, "norm-referenced" tests that rate students in comparison with other students rather than on how much they know. (These tests, when they are made consequential, lead to a great deal of non-curricular test-prepping.) The Administration could fail to commit enough money to pay for good tests, and to make the worst schools better. The adequate-yearly-progress formula could get so watered down that genuinely low-performing schools wouldn't be identified as such. Schools could duck the obligation to improve the education of their poor and minority students by hiding their performance beneath averages. And the list of pitfalls goes on. A national tidal wave of lousy tests, sloppily administered and scored, could lead to a wholesale revolt against educational standards, and a return to the old business of the liberals wanting more money and the conservatives wanting vouchers.

Much of this will be settled in conference, and how it will be settled will depend on what the President pushes for and how hard. The whole world will not be watching. The whole world will be too confused to follow the action. The next month will be a pure test of Bush's level of energy, commitment, attention to detail, political skill, and courage on the issue that took him to the White House and that he cares about most. I asked Margaret La Montagne if she would have taken the job of chief of domestic policy in the White House, which has entailed spending weeks away from her children for nearly half a year, if Bush had told her that he wasn't going to push for the education bill. "Probably not," she said. "It's what I came here to do. It's what *he* came here to do." If Bush came to Washington to put the Texas-standards system into place, he has not yet done so, because of the weakening of the bill in Congress. But he will have another chance this month in the conference.

During my meeting with George Miller, once he had come down from the high of his Presidential phone call, we got onto the subject of the conference, and he sounded worried. "It's already starting to slide away," he said. "A lot of the governors—well, nobody *really* wants to be accountable. It's select-a-test. Kabosh, kaboo, kabee—it's like talking to the fucking Marx Brothers! It's up to the President of the United States. He's the only one who can rescue it now."

I asked Miller if he'd told Bush that. "Have I told him? No. Will I? Yes. It's his friends the governors who are leading the charge. You either have a tight system or a loose system, which works really harshly against poor and minority students. Averages, composites—how can you ever figure out what's going on? It's the euphemisms that kill you in this business. Language is crucial. Words become important. What side Bush comes down on will determine the outcome. And so far we don't know how he comes down." Miller shook his head. "The President has a lot at risk. If it comes out squishy, it'll become apparent."

What if it comes out squishy and nobody notices, I asked. "Oh, I'll notice," he said. "You have a Republican President coming to Washington, saying, 'I want to target the poorest schools and get measurable results.' For it to work out now, he cannot go squishy. That's the trap Bill Clinton fell into. You either repeat history or you change history." ♦

ADVERTISEMEN

NO. 1

The New Yorker's advertisers invite you to find out more about their products and services. Visit their Web site or call them at their 800-number listed below.

BOLD TYPE: AN ON-LINE LITERARY MAGAZINE
www.boldtype.com

BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY
1.866.372.1199
www.travelbritain.org/2001

CELTIC TRAVELER
1.800.399.3473
www.celtictraveler.com

DAEDALUS BOOKS
1.800.395.2665
www.salebooks.com

EDGECRAFT CORP.
(Home of Chef'sChoice® products)
1.800.342.3255
www.chefschoice.com

INCA - INTERNATIONAL NATURE AND CULTURAL ADVENTURES
www.inca1.com

JUST IN TIME
(Hats for women with hair loss)
www.softhats.com

NORTHWEST AIRLINES INC.
1.800.225.2525
www.nwa.com

SILVER FUND
1.877.224.5230
www.thesilverfund.com

SMITH BARNEY MUTUAL FUNDS
1.888.SERIOUS ext. 2242
www.smithbarney.com/mutualfunds

UTAH.COM
(Enter our sweepstakes and win a trip to Utah)
1.800.UTAH.FUN
www.utah.com/relax

For more information, log on to www.newyorker.com and click on The New Yorker Reader Link

SHOUTS & MURMURS

“BLITZKRIEG!,” THE MOVIE

BY BRUCE McCALL

Disney studio executives will be deleting—from the print [of “Pearl Harbor”] that goes overseas—certain speeches and bits of dialogue that might offend Japanese or German audiences.—*The Wall Street Journal.*

This summarizes everybody’s notes on the “Blitzkrieg!” screenplay.

Pp. 1-7: Frankly, nobody feels all that great about the Austria-Czechoslovakia-Poland prologue. Consensus: you couldn’t have made the Germans bigger baddies if you’d tried. (“Nazi juggernaut” typical of loaded lingo. And can’t we find a synonym for “jackboot”?) Our German friends buy tickets, guys, and with the budget at a hundred and ninety million dollars and rising—’nuff said!

Pp. 22-36: Do we *have* to show Belgium being overrun? One of our German tech advisers (ex-military; he ought to know) says they were asking for it anyway with all that “neutrality” stuff. Fix: dive-bomber pilot saying something like “They make those great *frites* with mayonnaise here. Mmm!” Got it? A little *evenhandedness*, please!

Let’s take stock. The Germans need a motive. (“European conquest” stuff *way* too one-sided.) See things from *their* P.O.V. once in a while! (Do you think only the French had sensitivities?) Brainstorm: maybe plant seeds of doubt that the blitzkrieg was even a German operation. It could have been Russia. Not as crazy as it sounds, guys. Russians don’t buy many movie tickets.

P. 45: Critique: having the Germans speak German slants everything they say. Idea: have them speak English, with German subtitles. Nobody reads subtitles.

P. 51: Old French peasant guy shouldn’t yell, “The Nazis are coming!”; how about “The other side is coming!” or “We’ve got visitors!” Let audience apportion blame; it’s not our responsibility. And if peasant has to get shot, have him accidentally do it with his own gun. (Could give German officer a chance to say, “Guns should be handled very carefully,” instead of “Take that, French swine dog.” I know, it seems like a very subtle change—but wait till opening night in Berlin!)

Net-net: why make everything so black-and-white? What people want in a hundred-and-ninety-five-million-dollar international mass-entertainment blockbuster is balance!

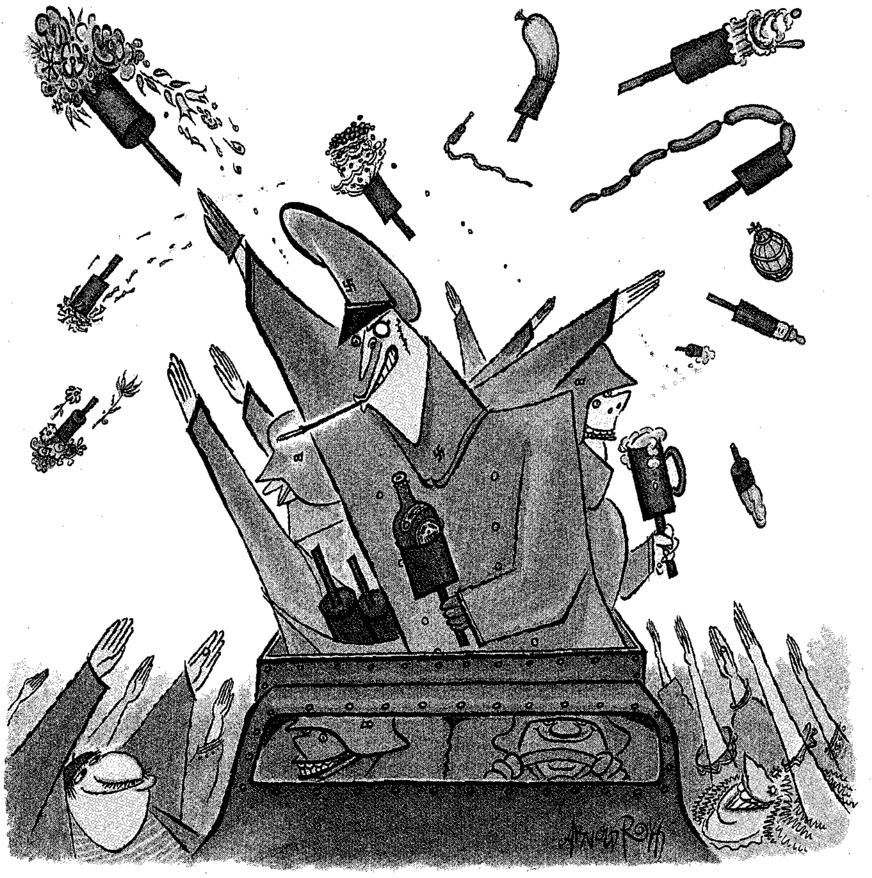
Pp. 55-62: Reichschancellery scenes a good example. Fair’s fair, people! (1) Göring shouldn’t be shown as being any fatter than Churchill. (2) Hitler, our research staff says, was the official head of a big country in 1940—so for God’s sake back off. Maybe the whole room could start spinning and A.H. mumbles something like “These headaches from my old war wound, they’re driving me *mad!* Sometimes I fear for my sanity!” Gives A.H. a halfway simpatico backstory.

P. 65: We’re well into the movie here and *where are the Yanks*? Psst, guys, sixty per cent of the grosses have got to come from the U.S. Suggestion: do Dunkirk as an *all-American* op, Marines evacuating the beaches. Or maybe the French Resistance can be Yank-led. P.S. Make Gestapo torture scene a *dream sequence.* Takes the edge off.

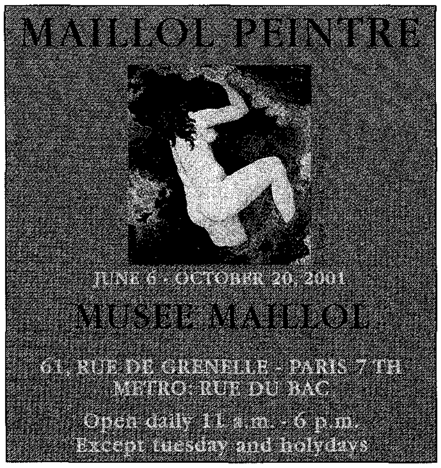
Pp. 67-69: Blowing up Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Louvre, etc., is spectacular filmmaking—*but what’s the motive*? Previous scene has Marshal Pétain telling Eva Braun, “I see a united Europe one not very distant day.” Confusing!

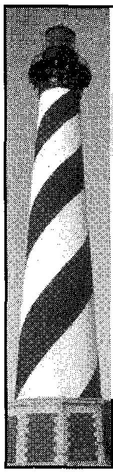
Pp. 69-71: Whole Germans-entering-Paris scene is a big-time downer. Makes the Germans look like a bunch of conquerors. Alternative: French and German soldiers buying each other drinks at the Moulin Rouge as “Deutschland Über Alles” is played on a musette, nice and soft? Audience may or may not get it, but we’ve done our job.

Pp. 96-101: French surrender at Compiègne. Everything about this scene is terrific—except the surrender. Not exactly an upbeat ending, particularly as staged in that creepy old railway car. The picture should go out on a big, big lift. No need to make the blitzkrieg look like Pearl Harbor or something, guys. ♦



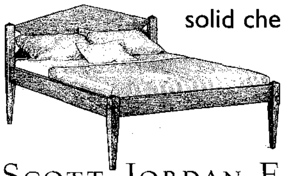
ARNOLD ROTH


MAILLOL PEINTRE
JUNE 6 - OCTOBER 20, 2001
MUSÉE MAILLOL
61, RUE DE GRENELLE - PARIS 7 TH
METRO: RUE DU BAC
Open daily 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Except tuesday and holydays


Cool Maine!
Workshops This August
Weekly Classes By
Award Winning Instructors

- Ballroom Dancing
- Photography
- Travel Writing
- Children's Book Illustrations
- Oil Painting
- Watercoloring
- Feng Shui
- Women Traveling Alone
- Creating Websites

Tuition $ 400 (Dance Workshop $ 400 per couple)
EASTERNMOST INSTITUTE
Old Grange Hall, Lubec ME
506-752-2591 • www.grangelubec.com


solid cherry bedsteads
built to last
scottjordan.com
212.620.4682
137 Varick NYC
SCOTT JORDAN FURNITURE

A priceless vacation
Affordable Villas in Italy
FREE CATALOG - ONLINE BOOKING
800 280 2811
www.THEPARKERCOMPANY.com

Healthy Solutions for Losing Weight
STRUCTURE • HOUSE •
◆ Physical Health
◆ Emotional Renewal
◆ Beautiful Surroundings
◆ Personal Support
800.553.0052 ◆ http:www.StructureHouse.com

IMAGINE YOURSELF IMMORTALIZED IN THE POP ART STYLE OF THE 60'S &70'S...
www.wsservice.com/neo60
(630)953-2033
Brilliantly colored acrylic & silkscreen on canvas
Neo 60 Studios

DEPT. OF DECORATION

THE ILLUSTRATING MAN

How the fight to legalize tattooing in Massachusetts was won.

BY SUSAN ORLEAN

Stephan Lanphear, the man who brought tattoos back to Massachusetts, is rangy and regular-looking, with choppy brown hair and a long, sweet face—the sort of young guy you might sit next to on a bus and not remember later. Naked, he would be easier to keep in mind, because he is intricately marked, wrist to neck to waist to ankle, working his way into what tattoo artists call a full body suit. Lanphear is thirty-six years old. He ran away from home as a teen-ager and got his first tattoo at seventeen, when he was working at Sohozat, a comic-book store in Manhattan. Over the next few years, he got more tattoos; eventually, he learned how to tattoo and knew immediately that he had found his métier. He is a man who loves his job, and often says things like "Tattooing's done all these great things for me!" and "I haven't tattooed anyone in weeks and I'm just going crazy!"

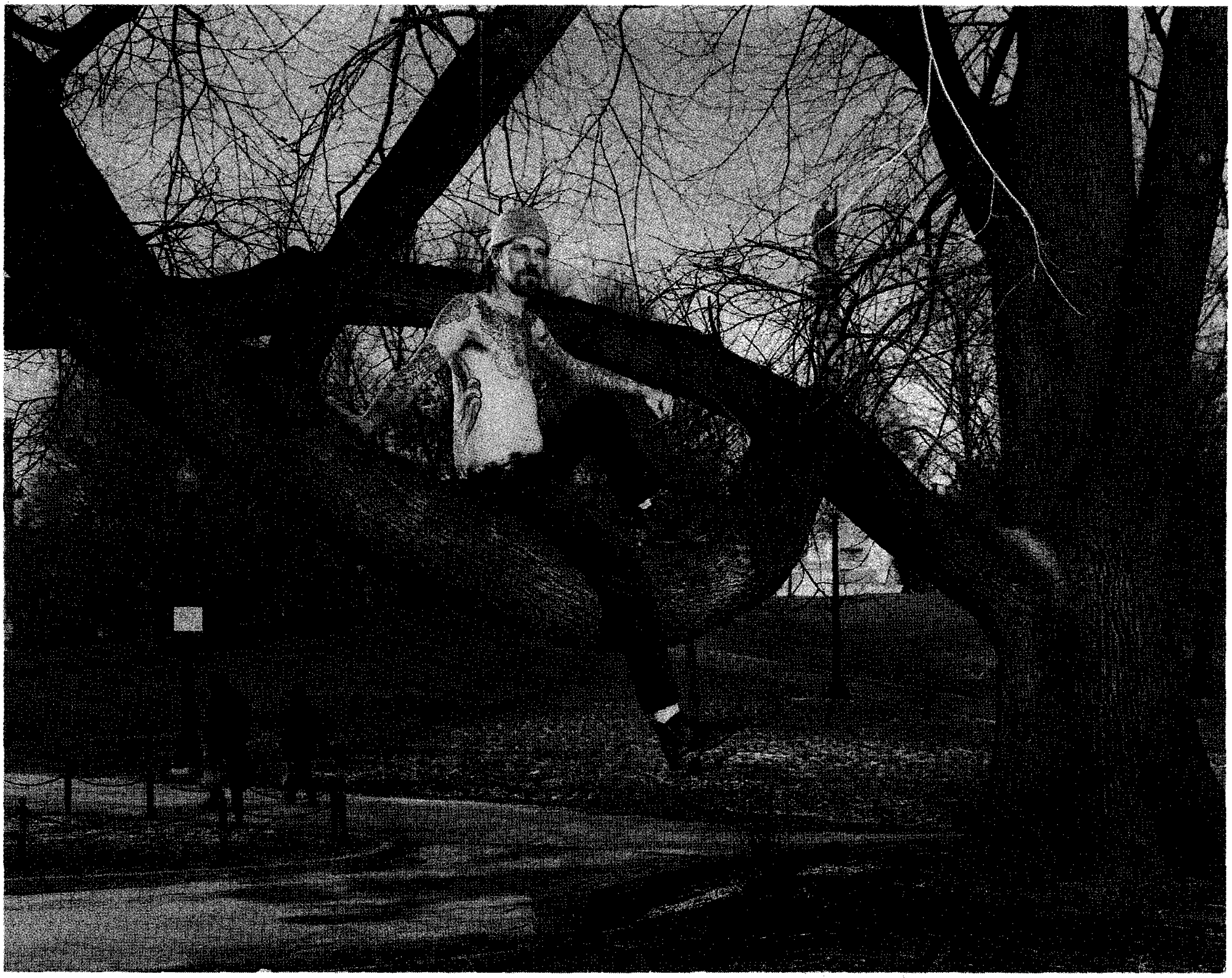
In 1984, Lanphear moved to Martha's Vineyard with his girlfriend, Gretchen Philbrick. He was making a living as a carpenter, but without much enthusiasm. "I wasn't really digging standing outside in the cold weather and the rain," he said not long ago. "I started dreaming of opening my own tattoo business." Gretchen sold her Volvo so that Lanphear could buy a mail-order tattoo kit and set up a little studio. "I never thought to ask myself why there weren't any tattoo shops on the Vineyard," he continued. "My business lasted a few months. I had tattooed some kid who then went into a bar in town, and he showed off his tattoo and mentioned my name, and it got back to the Board of Health."

In no time, Lanphear figured out why there weren't any tattoo shops on Martha's Vineyard: tattooing had been outlawed in Massachusetts since 1962. In spite of repeated campaigns by tattoo artists and aficionados to change the law, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts still deemed tattooing a "crime against the person," punishable by fines or imprisonment or both. More frustrating still, Massachusetts was the only state besides South Carolina and Oklahoma that had outlawed it—making the ban on tattooing possibly the only position the three states had in common.

Lanphear closed his studio and moved to Rochester. He and Gretchen tried to interest the American Civil Liberties Union in his predicament but had no luck. Several years later, Gretchen contacted the A.C.L.U. again, arguing that the right to tattoo was a serious matter. Soon afterward, Lanphear met with Sarah Wunsch, an A.C.L.U. staff attorney, and Harvey Schwartz, a Boston lawyer whose firm handles employment and civil-rights litigation. Schwartz's last case for the A.C.L.U. involved securing parade permits for neo-Nazis.

"I wouldn't say there was a long line of people at the A.C.L.U. waiting to do Stephan's case," Schwartz said recently. "The people at the A.C.L.U. are baby boomers. There was a lot of stomach-turning when we talked about tattoos." Schwartz, who is in his fifties, said he had his tattoo consciousness raised by his son. "A few years ago, I mentioned to him that I had four little alignment dots tattooed on me when I was having radiation treatment, and then he confessed that he had a tattoo, too—a big one, running up his arm. It's horrendous. He's going to feel really bad about it when he's forty-five." Schwartz decided to argue that the freedom to tattoo was a component of free speech. He wasn't encouraged when the case was assigned to Barbara Rouse, a judge whom he considered thoughtful but not an activist on First Amendment issues. "On the other hand," he said, "you never know who might have a rose tattooed on her ankle."

For most of the twentieth century, tattoos had been easy to come by in Massachusetts—especially around Scollay Square, a down-in-the-mouth



Stephan Lanphear's work as a tattoo artist was considered a "crime against the person." Photograph by Taryn Simon.

wholesale district near Boston's West End. According to David Kruh, whose book, "Always Something Doing," documents the history of the area, the neighborhood was home to such popular entertainers as Sally Keith, who could spin her nipple tassels in opposite directions; Eko and Iko, the albino brothers; Zorita the Snake Girl; Jo-Jo the Dog-Faced Boy; and Mademoiselle Airline, the Human Match. Soldiers, sailors, bookies, drifters, and drunks warmly embraced the theatres and retail establishments around Scollay Square—hot-dog shops, penny arcades, burlesque houses, rum bars, and scores of quick-draw tattoo parlors, where for five dollars you could get "Mom" permanently inscribed on your biceps, or the proverbial bird's-eye view of Sydney tattooed over your kidney. In the meantime, the rest of Boston was wilting. By the late fifties, it had a lower bond rating and less taxable property than almost any equivalent city in the country. In 1961, a fire gutted the Old Howard, the largest theatre in Scollay Square, which was considered a stroke of good timing by urban planners, since by then the city wanted to clean up the entire district and build a new government-office complex. The following year, alleging that tattooing could set off a hepatitis outbreak, Massachusetts outlawed it—except for medical purposes, as in Harvey Schwartz's case.

Who really cared that tattooing was outlawed? Tattooscene.com estimates that there were only five hundred tattoo artists working in the whole country then, and their customers were Hell's Angels, circus freaks, performance artists, prisoners, and sailors—all either politically irrelevant or happy to be tattooed by "scratchers" operating without the benefit of legal sanction. For the next decade, tattooing was in a fallow period. Then Asian imagery and new, more vivid colored inks started to renew interest, and by 1982 the enthusiasm for tattooing was such that an industry convention was held on the Queen Mary, in Long Beach, California, and Governor Jerry Brown issued a welcome proclamation. By the early nineties, fashion was celebrating tribalism and transgressive style, and Madonna, Dennis Rodman, and Cher were flaunting their tattoos. In 1997, *U.S. News & World Report* stated that tattooing was the sixth-fastest-growing retail industry in the country. Its customer base increasingly included middle-class suburban women.

What do you do, then, if you're a tattoo artist living in the anti-tattoo state of Massachusetts while this revival is going on? You pierce, because there are no state restrictions on piercing, and you agitate to change the tattoo laws. One afternoon last winter, I went to Body Xtremes, a piercing salon near Boston owned by a former police officer named Mik Miller. Miller has one of the most amusing tattoos I've ever seen—besides having spiders and symbols all over his face, a ring through his nose, and multiple piercings in his eyebrows, chin, and tongue, he has a face tattooed on the back of his shaved head, so that it's hard to tell if you're standing in front of him or behind him.

Miller found piercing artistically stifling. "Belly buttons! Belly buttons! Belly buttons!" he said. "It's not that I don't like working. I'm fifty-four and I love to work. But I got so sick of belly buttons. Sometimes from nine in the morning until ten at night it was nothing but one belly button after another."

"We do a lot of tongues, too," said his niece, who was working the cash register.

"True," Mik said. "But we still do about four belly buttons for every tongue." The door of the shop opened, and three teen-agers wearing bluejeans and Pumas came in and headed for the jewelry case. "I've been doing this for twenty-six years," Miller said. "In the beginning, you couldn't make a living doing it. But then MTV started showing all these bands with their piercings and their tattoos, and it got huge. It's still growing as a business. It'll never slow down."

Miller, along with Leo and Judy Murphy, who now own piercing and tattoo parlors in Salem, New Hampshire, and Gloucester and Salem, Massachusetts, formed the tattoo vanguard in the state. They had circulated petitions—in 1986 alone, Miller collected a hundred and fifty thousand signatures—and had spoken before the legislature in support of tattooing; they had even met with the Department of Public Health and got an assurance that the department would not oppose legalization. None of them had ever even met Stephan Lanphear; they knew vaguely of the case and assumed that it would be dismissed.

TRASH CONTAINS EIGHTEEN ITEMS. ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO REMOVE THEM PERMANENTLY?

In his brief, filed on February 11, 2000, Harvey Schwartz made the argument that tattooing was a form of free expression, protected by the same constitutional principles that apply to other forms of expressive display, such as parades and nude dancing. He discounted the state's concerns over tattooing's health risks, pointing out that these are minimal, and that piercing, which is unregulated, raises greater risks, as does the practice of collecting blood for laboratory tests. Moreover, Schwartz said, the ban on tattooing was mostly ineffective: enforcement against scratchers was rare; "tattoo parties" were joining Tupperware parties as suburban get-togethers; and the tattoo parlors near the border in New Hampshire reported that most of their customers were Massachusetts residents. Schwartz knew that the legislature was considering a tattoo bill—Mik Miller was scheduled to testify in support of it—and he figured that the bill might well be passed before his case was decided. Lanphear didn't dare to hope for anything.

Then Judge Rouse caught everyone by surprise. On October 20, 2000, she ruled that the state's nearly forty-year prohibition against tattooing was "void as violative of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and article 16 of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights." Schwartz was ecstatic. Lanphear was astonished. His first reaction, once Schwartz told him the news, was to declare that he was going to name his first child Harvey. In the meantime, he offered to give Schwartz one of the first legal tattoos in Massachusetts in almost forty years.

There was great excitement in Massachusetts about the return of tattooing. Mik Miller got hundreds of calls and well over five hundred E-mails from supporters the day that the Boston *Herald* reported Judge Rouse's decision. Less excited were shop owners in New Hampshire. After the ruling, I drove north to the border town of Salem, New Hampshire, where tattoo shops are clustered. Route 28 runs up to Salem from

Boston, threading through an array of auto shops, pizza joints, doll hospitals, and liquor outlets in squat concrete storefronts and in trailers up on blocks and even in a few wood-frame decommissioned farmhouses. According to state records, New Hampshire has two hundred and sixty-two licensed tattoo artists working out of ten mobile facilities and sixty-five studios, many of which are clumped together near the Massachusetts state line.

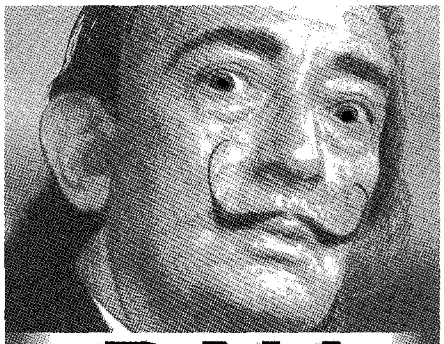
During the summer, most tattoo shops are mobbed, but when it's cold, as it was when I was in Salem, they're in the doldrums—dismal and forlorn, like abandoned carnivals. They were probably even more dismal and forlorn than usual, because the new freedom to tattoo in Massachusetts may put them out of business. Many New Hampshire shops have already opened branches across the border, and many are likely to move south altogether. The afternoon I was in Salem, Masterpiece Tattoo was nearly empty. Tattoos by Benny was shut. At Golden Tattoo, two customers—a buxom woman, who had a blue-rose tattoo on her chest, and her buxom daughter, who had no visible markings—were lounging on a flabby sofa in the reception area, chatting with the tattoo artist on duty. The older woman said that her visit was part business and part pleasure; she was thinking of getting another tattoo, and she also had some knives for sale, which she was hoping the tattoo artist might be interested in. The woman said that her name was Debbie and that she lived an hour south, in a small town near Boston. Her daughter was shy and gazed off until Debbie poked her in the side and said, "Show her your tattoo, honey!" The daughter pulled up her sleeve and revealed a red-and-purple songbird. "Is that gorgeous," Debbie said, "or is that gorgeous?" The tattoo artist grinned and looked proud. I asked Debbie how she had become a Golden Tattoo customer. "My brother came here twenty years ago," Debbie said. "I have five brothers, and this is where all of them got tattooed. I have only one brother who doesn't have any tattoos—he's a bleeder." She said that the ruling in favor of tattoos in Massachusetts wouldn't affect her. "It's like going to the hairdresser," she said. "You go where you like it. I'm not going to start going to someone in Massachusetts now just because. I like it here. I looked into this guy's eyes and I trusted him." She motioned to the tattoo artist, who was running his thumb along the edge of a brass-plated dagger. "And he's sweet, too," she said. "He gives you lollipops and lets you take breaks."

He shrugged, looking embarrassed, and then said that he actually lived in Massachusetts and, much as he liked being part of the Golden Tattoo family, he wouldn't mind a shorter commute.

Tattoo artists looking for work in Massachusetts shouldn't have any trouble these days; shortly after Judge Rouse's ruling, tattoo shops opened all over the state. Overnight, Massachusetts was transformed from a state where it had been illegal to get a tattoo into a state where, because there were no regulations in place, it appeared that, say, a ten-year-old could legally tattoo an eight-year-old. The Massachusetts Attorney General, sensing the beginnings of a body-art catastrophe, requested an emergency stay. The Department of Public Health was given until January 31st to draw up rules and licensing procedures, and the commissioners invited tattoo artists to pitch in. One bitter winter's day, health-department officials and other state bureaucrats met with Lanphear, Miller, and the Murphys in a drab room in downtown Boston. When I arrived, the group was sitting around a conference table and Miller was showing them an ear-piercing gun and twelve-gauge needles manufactured by Pleasurable Piercings, Inc.

"I think we should prohibit tattoos on people under eighteen," Miller was saying. "It seems like in this day and age it's the kids who run the parents, and I don't think we want to get involved in that." As he spoke, the saucer-size rings in his ears jiggled a little, and the bug tattoos on his cheeks moved up and down. Someone in the room mentioned that he had taken the subway to the meeting. Miller peered over his reading glasses and said, "Really? Boy, I sure wouldn't. There are just too many weirdos on the subway for me."

A health-department commissioner asked the tattoo artists something about disposable needles and then said, "We're really going to need you guys to help us



DALI at UCLA
The largest exhibit of Salvador Dali art ever shown in Southern California
JULY 14-27
Tickets $7
Phone orders: (310) 825-2101
Online orders: www.tickets.ucla.edu
A portion of proceeds will benefit pediatric genetic research at the UCLA School of Medicine.
www.DaliAtUCLA.com
SPONSORED BY
THE SALVADOR DALI GALLERY & BRANA FINE ART
Pacific Palisades, California
(800) 275-3254

VERMONT OUTDOOR Furniture
FREE CATALOG
Quality, Comfort, Style & Value
Classic white cedar furniture
Benches, tables, chairs, porch swings, Adirondack chairs and more shipped direct from our shop in Barre with a 100% guarantee.
800-588-8834 • www.vermontoutdoorfurnitur.com

Cooking in Provence
taste and live the beauty
Spring & Fall workshops for fun-loving cooks
For brochure: (802) 457-5169
www.cookinginprovence.com

COUNTRY WALKERS
22 Years of excellence in Worldwide Walking Vacations
Europe, Africa, North & South America and the South Pacific
Free Catalog Call 800-464-9255
www.countrywalkers.com

Finest quality handcrafted bicycle frames.
tel: (617) 923-7774
e-mail: info5@sevencycles.com
www.sevencycles.com
SEVEN CYCLES

OH NO, NOT AGAIN.

with this subregulatory language. We need to do better than we did with tanning salons. Tanning is just a disaster in Massachusetts. Also, we're going to have to address tongue-splitting and cartilage-sculpting, and, let's see, finger and toe and rib removal, and, oh, teeth-filing, too. Actually, all the body-modification practices."

"Ugh," Lanphear said, leaning back in his chair. "I'm very conservative. I'm a traditionalist. I don't really think you want to get into that stuff."

"I'm conservative, too," Leo Murphy said. "I'm very passionate about certain things. I believe in the death penalty for child molesters and cemetery vandals. Judy and I belong to the Chamber of Commerce. We cater to moms. I've tattooed grandmothers. We've pierced a seventy-year-old gentleman's nipples. We really want to see this done right."

"I agree," another health-department official said, tapping her pencil. "I think there have to be limits. I don't think we want to be allowing the implantation of spikes in the head and so forth, do we?" A few people shook their heads. "By the way," the official said, to no one in particular, "can you please explain 'branding' to me?"

After Judy described what branding was—using cattle branding as an example—one of the commissioners said she wondered whether the law allows anyone to do anything to anyone, as long as it is consensual. The room was quiet for a moment. A lawyer cleared his throat and said, "I believe that if someone wants his neighbor to amputate his leg there might be some liability issues involved."

The Department of Public Health's temporary stay expired at the end of January, and tattooing commenced—recommenced, that is—after its hiatus of almost forty years. Some towns are still squeamish about the practice, and are trying to use zoning laws to restrict it: if tattooing could be classified as "adult entertainment," for instance, parlors could be confined to areas set aside for other adult entertainments, like strip joints and porn theatres. Local authorities in Holbrook and Lawrence have moved to prevent tattoo parlors from opening up within five hundred feet of schools and churches. Leo and Judy Murphy have asked the A.C.L.U. to challenge the restrictions that the city of Salem is considering. "Tattooed and pierced individuals have rights in this country too," Leo Murphy wrote in a recent letter to the Boston *Globe*. "Need we be reminded that people who perform or receive body art are just that, people. God bless America and our Constitutional rights, what's left of them."

On Martha's Vineyard, at least, there was no such resistance. In fact, when I called Stephan Lanphear recently to see how his business was doing, he was too busy to come to the phone. He managed to take a break a few days later to return my call. His tattoo studio is called Compass Rose, and he opened it at the beginning of April. For a few weeks, things were quiet, and then, Lanphear said, business just exploded. "Every single day is booked solid, twelve or fourteen hours a day, seven days a week," he said. "I didn't expect it to happen this way. It has just sort of blown up." He said that so far his customers have been people who live on the Vineyard year-round; as soon as the summer people arrived, business would be brisker, if that was even possible.

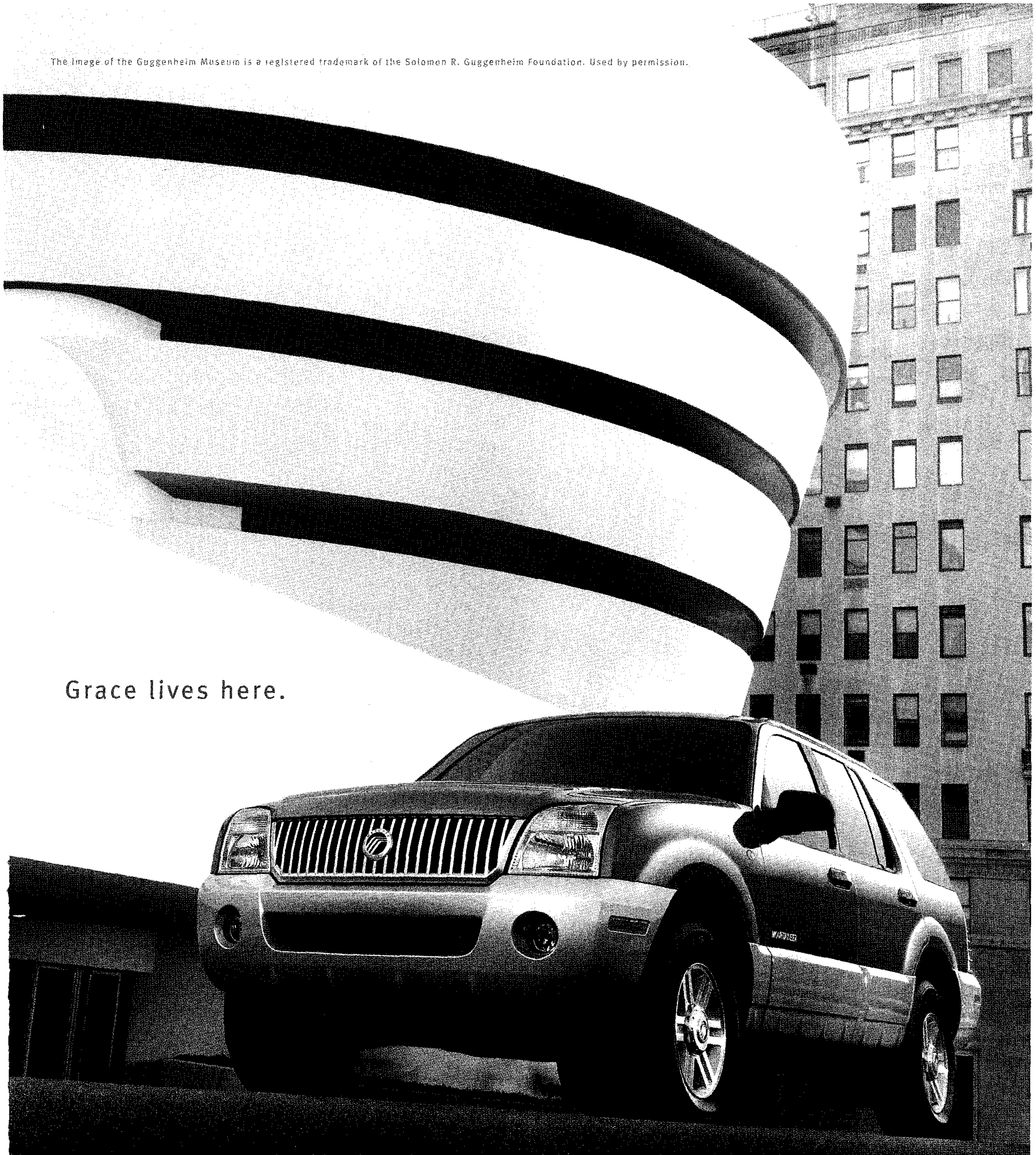
"The lawsuit was the defining moment of my life," Lanphear said. "I'll never back down from anything again." He informed me that Harvey Schwartz had accepted his offer of a tattoo but hadn't got it yet. He is still working on Schwartz's request that the tattoo symbolize the First Amendment while also complying with his wife's condition that it be very small and placed in a discreet location, such as between his toes. In the meantime, Lanphear had customers who were as old as seventy-two and as young as the legal tattooing age of eighteen, and said that in the short time he'd been open some of them had already come back to him for their fourth and fifth tattoos. Their tastes run to the traditional. "I'm doing a lot of hearts and daggers and eagles and panthers, that sort of thing," he said. "Nothing real, real challenging. But as long as I'm tattooing I'm happy." ♦

From the Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Inter Lake.

POLICE RESPOND TO BEAR,
EAGLE, LION CALLS

Apparently, you do grow closer to nature in the American West.

The image of the Guggenheim Museum is a registered trademark of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Used by permission.



Grace lives here.

An SUV's design should acknowledge where we live. And respond to its many influences. Presenting the all-new Mercury Mountaineer. Thoughtfully designed to reflect not only where we live and drive most—but who and what we drive with. Hence a generous third row of seating, and a most versatile and spacious cargo area.

At last, the SUV built for here, is here.

888 566-8888 2002mountaineer.com **2002 Mountaineer**

Mercury

ANNALS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

THE MOSQUITO KILLER

Millions of people owe their lives to Fred Soper. Why isn't he a hero?

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

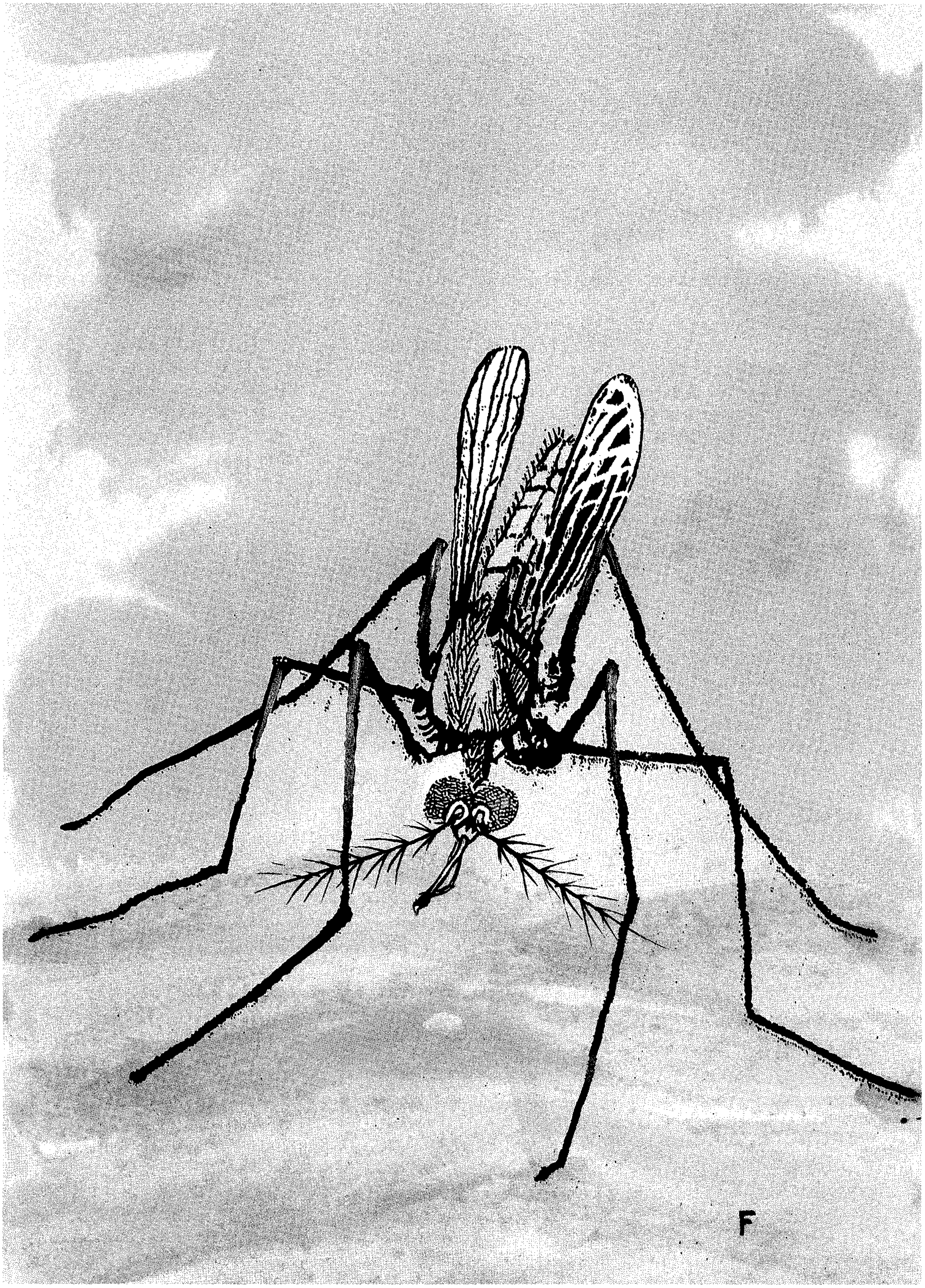
In the late nineteen-thirties, a chemist who worked for the J. R. Geigy company, in Switzerland, began experimenting with an odorless white crystalline powder called dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane. The chemist, Paul Müller, wanted to find a way to protect woollens against moths, and his research technique was to coat the inside of a glass box with whatever chemical he was testing, and then fill it with houseflies. To his dismay, the flies seemed unaffected by the new powder. But, in one of those chance decisions on which scientific discovery so often turns, he continued his experiment overnight—and in the morning all the flies were dead. He emptied the box, and put in a fresh batch of flies. By the next morning, they, too, were dead. He added more flies, and then a handful of other insects. They all died. He scrubbed the box with an acetone solvent, and repeated the experiment with a number of closely related compounds that he had been working with. The flies kept dying. Now he was excited: had he come up with a whole line of potent new insecticides? As it turned out, he hadn't. The new candidate chemicals were actually useless. To his amazement, what was killing the flies in the box were scant traces of the first compound, dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane—or, as it would come to be known, DDT.

In 1942, Geigy sent a hundred kilograms of the miracle powder to its New York office. The package lay around, undisturbed, until another chemist, Victor Froelicher, happened to translate the extraordinary claims for DDT into English, and then passed on a sample to the Department of Agriculture, which in turn passed it on to its entomology research station, in Orlando, Florida. The Orlando laboratory had been charged by the Army to develop new pesticides, because the military, by this point in the war, was desperate for a better way to protect its troops against insect-borne disease. Typhus—the lethal fever spread by lice—had killed millions of people during and after the First World War and was lurking throughout the war zones. Worse, in almost every theatre of operations, malaria-carrying mosquitoes were causing havoc. As Robert Rice recounted in this magazine almost fifty years ago, the First Marine Division had to be pulled from combat in 1942 and sent to Melbourne to recuperate because, out of seventeen thousand men, ten thousand were incapacitated with malarial headaches, fevers, and chills. Malaria hit eighty-five per cent of the men holding onto Bataan. In fact, at any one time in the early stages of the war, according to General Douglas MacArthur, two-thirds of his troops in the South Pacific were sick with malaria. Unless something was done, MacArthur complained to the malariologist Paul Russell, it was going to be "a long war." Thousands of candidate insecticides were tested at Orlando, and DDT was by far the best.

To gauge a chemical's potential against insects, the Orlando researchers filled a sleeve with lice and a candidate insecticide, slipped the sleeve over a subject's arm, and taped it down at both ends. After twenty-four hours, the dead lice were removed and fresh lice were added. A single application of DDT turned out to kill lice for a month, almost four times longer than the next-best insecticide. As Rice described it, researchers filled twelve beakers with mosquito larvae, and placed descending amounts of DDT in each receptacle—with the last beaker DDT free. The idea was to see how much chemical was needed to kill the mosquitoes. The mosquito larvae in *every* beaker died. Why? Because just the few specks of chemical that floated through the air and happened to land in the last beaker while the experiment was being set up were enough to kill the mosquitoes. Quickly, a field test was scheduled. Two duck ponds were chosen, several miles apart. One was treated with DDT. One was not. Spraying was done on a day when the wind could not carry the DDT from the treated to the untreated pond. The mosquito larvae in the first pond soon died. But a week later mosquito larvae in the untreated pond also died: when ducks from the first pond visited the second pond, there was enough DDT residue on their feathers to kill mosquitoes there as well.

The new compound was administered to rabbits and cats. Rice tells how human volunteers slathered themselves with it, and sat in vaults for hours, inhaling the fumes. Tests were done to see how best to apply it. "It was put in solution or suspension, depending on what we were trying to do," Geoffrey Jeffery, who worked on DDT at the Tennessee Valley Authority, recalls. "Sometimes we'd use some sort of petroleum-based carrier, even diesel oil, or add water to a paste or concentration and apply it on the wall with a Hudson sprayer." Under conditions of great secrecy, factories were set up, to manufacture the new chemical by the ton. It was rushed to every Allied theatre. In Naples, in 1944, the Army averted a catastrophic typhus epidemic by "dusting" more than a million people with DDT powder. The Army Air Force built DDT "bombs," attaching six-hundred-and-twenty-five-gallon tanks to the underside of the wings of B-25s and C-47s, and began spraying Pacific beachheads in advance of troop arrivals. In Saipan, invading marines were overtaken by dengue, a debilitating fever borne by the *Aedes* variety of mosquito. Five hundred men were falling sick every day, each incapacitated for four to five weeks. The medical officer called in a DDT air strike that saturated the sur-

FILIP PAGOWSKI



In the Second World War, mosquitoes caused havoc. If something weren't done, General MacArthur said, it would be "a long war."

rounding twenty-five square miles with nearly nine thousand gallons of five-per-cent DDT solution. The dengue passed. The marines took Saipan.

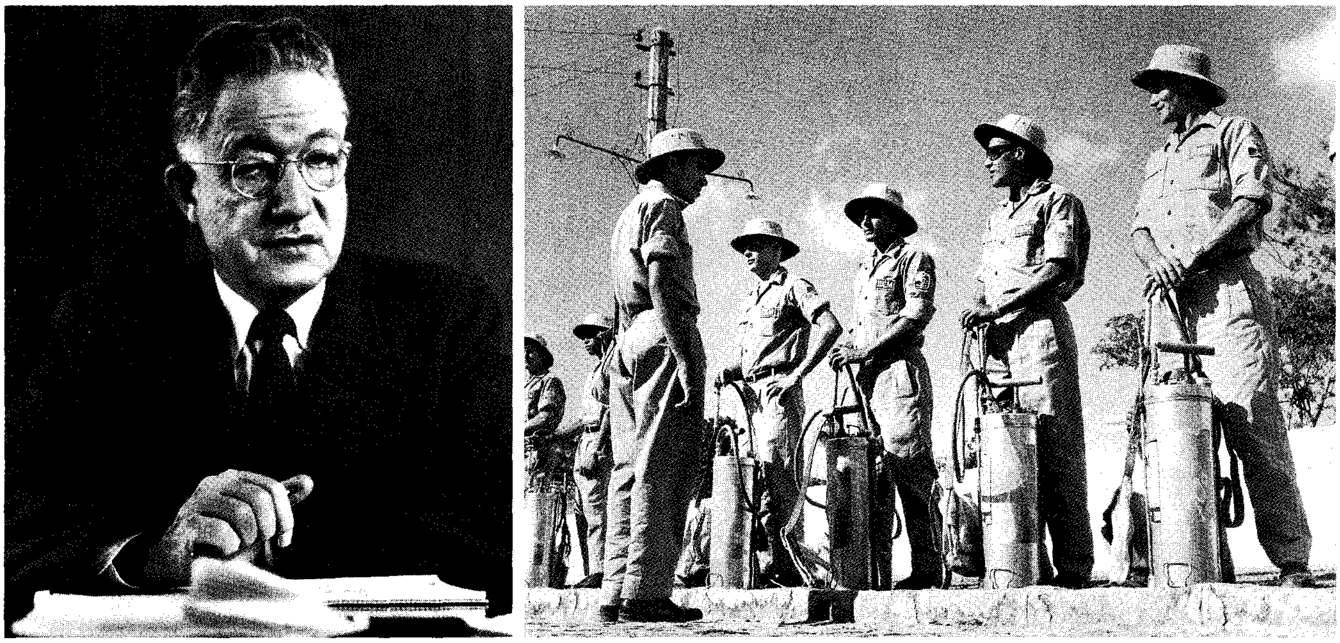
It is hard to overestimate the impact that DDT's early success had on the world of public health. In the nineteen-forties, there was still malaria in the American South. There was malaria throughout Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean. In India alone, malaria killed eight hundred thousand people a year. When, in 1920, William Gorgas, the man who cleansed the Panama Canal Zone of malaria, fell mortally ill during a trip through England, he was knighted on his deathbed by King George V and given an official state funeral at St. Paul's Cathedral—and this for an American who just happened to be in town when he died. That is what it meant to be a malaria fighter in the first half of the last century. And now there was a chemical—the first successful synthetic pesticide—that seemed to have an almost magical ability to kill mosquitoes. In 1948, Müller won the Nobel Prize for his work with DDT, and over the next twenty years his discovery became the centerpiece of the most ambitious public-health campaign in history.

Today, of course, DDT is a symbol of all that is dangerous about man's attempts to interfere with nature. Rachel Carson, in her landmark 1962 book, "Silent Spring," wrote memorably of the chemical's environmental consequences, how its unusual persistence and toxicity had laid waste to wildlife and aquatic ecosystems. Only two countries—India and China—continue to manufacture the substance, and only a few dozen more still use it. In May, at the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, more than ninety countries signed a treaty, placing DDT on a restricted-use list, and asking all those still using the chemical to develop plans for phasing it out entirely. On the eve of its burial, however—and at a time when the threat of insect-borne disease around the world seems to be resurgent—it is worth remembering that people once felt very differently about DDT, and that between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the nineteen-sixties it was considered not a dangerous pollutant but a lifesaver. The chief proponent of that view was a largely forgotten man named Fred Soper, who ranks as one of the unsung heroes of the twentieth century. With DDT as his weapon, Soper almost saved the world from one of its most lethal afflictions. Had he succeeded, we would not today be writing DDT's obituary. We would view it in the same heroic light as penicillin and the polio vaccine.

Fred Soper was a physically imposing man. He wore a suit, it was said, like a uniform. His hair was swept straight back from his forehead. His eyes were narrow. He had large wire-rimmed glasses, and a fastidiously maintained David Niven mustache. Soper was born in Kansas in 1893, received a doctorate from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and spent the better part of his career working for the Rockefeller Foundation, which in the years before the Second World War—before the establishment of the United Nations and the World Health Organization—functioned as the world's unofficial public-health directorate, using its enormous resources to fight everything from yellow fever in Colombia to hookworm in Thailand.

In those years, malaria warriors fell into one of two camps. The first held that the real enemy was the malaria parasite—the protozoan that mosquitoes pick up from the blood of an infected person and transmit to others. The best way to break the chain of infection, this group argued, was to treat the sick with antimalarial drugs, to kill the protozoan so there was nothing for mosquitoes to transmit. The second camp held, to the contrary, that the mosquito was the real enemy, since people would not get malaria in the first place if there were no mosquitoes around to bite them. Soper belonged to the latter group, and his special contribution was to raise the killing of mosquitoes to an art. Gorgas, Soper's legendary predecessor, said that in order to fight malaria you had to learn to think like a mosquito. Soper disagreed. Fighting malaria, he said, had very little to do with the intricacies of science and biology. The key was learning to think like the men he hired to go door-to-door and stream-to-stream, killing mosquitoes. His method was to apply motivation, discipline, organization, and zeal, in understanding human nature. Fred Soper was the General Patton of entomology.

While working in South America in 1930, Soper had enforced a rigorous protocol for inspecting houses for mosquito infestation, which involved checking cisterns and climbing along roof gutters. (He pushed himself so hard perfecting the system in the field that he lost twenty-seven pounds in three months.) He would map an area to be cleansed of mosquitoes, give each house a number, and then assign each number to a sector. A sector, in turn, would be assigned to an inspector, armed with the crude pesticides then available; the inspector's schedule for each day was planned to the minute, in advance, and his work double-checked by a supervisor. If a supervisor found a mosquito that the inspector had missed, he received a bonus. And if the supervisor found that the inspector had deviated by more than ten minutes from his preassigned schedule the inspector was docked a day's pay. Once, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, a large ammunition dump—the Niterói Arsenal—blew up. Soper, it was said, heard the explosion in his office, checked the location of the arsenal on one of his maps, verified by the master schedule that an inspector was at the dump at the time of the accident, and immediately sent condolences and a check to the widow. The next day, the inspector showed up for work, and Soper fired him on the spot—for being alive. Soper, in one memorable description, "seemed equally capable of browbeating man or mosquito." He did not engage in small talk. In 1973, at Soper's eightieth-birthday party, a former colleague recounted how much weight he had lost working for Soper; another told a story of how Soper looked at him uncomprehendingly when he asked to go home to visit his ailing wife; a third spoke of Soper's betting prowess. "He was very cold and very formal," remembers Andrew Spielman, a senior investigator in tropical disease at the Harvard School of Public Health and the author, with Michael D'Antonio, of the marvellous new book "Mosquito: A Natural History of Our Most Persistent and Deadly Foe." "He always wore a suit and tie. With that thin little mustache and big long upper lip, he scared the hell out of me."

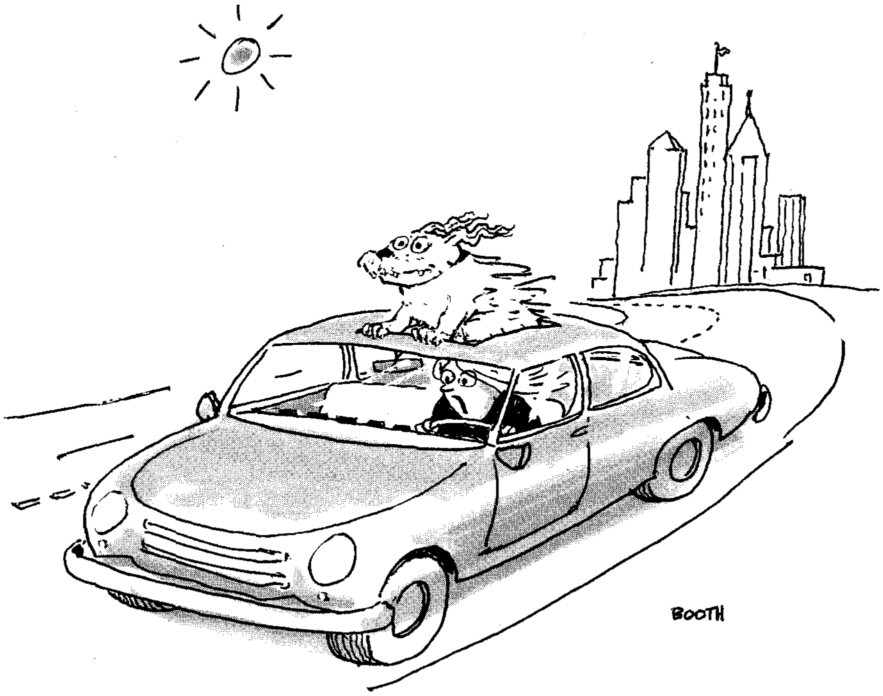


To Soper, DDT seemed like a gift from God. An eradication team in Brazil, in 1959; uniformed men went door to door, spraying.

LEFT, PAHO; RIGHT, MAXINE RUDE/PAHO/WHO

One of Soper's greatest early victories came in Brazil, in the late nineteen-thirties, when he took on a particularly vicious strain of mosquito known as *Anopheles gambiae*. There are about twenty-five hundred species of mosquito in the world, each with its own habits and idiosyncrasies—some like running water, some like standing water, some bite around the ankles, some bite on the arms, some bite indoors, some bite outdoors—but only mosquitoes of the genus *Anopheles* are capable of carrying the human malaria parasite. And, of the sixty species of *Anopheles* that can transmit malaria, *gambiae* is the variety best adapted to spreading the disease. In California, there is a strain of *Anopheles* known as *freeborni*, which is capable of delivering a larger dose of malaria parasite than *gambiae* ever could. But *freeborni* is not a good malaria vector, because it prefers animals to people. *Gambiae*, by contrast, bites humans ninety-five per cent of the time. It has long legs and yellow-and-black spotted wings. It likes to breed in muddy pools of water, even in a water-filled footprint. And, unlike many mosquitoes, it is long-lived, meaning that once it has picked up the malaria parasite it can spread the protozoan to many others. *Gambiae* gathers in neighborhoods in the evenings, slips into houses at dusk, bites quietly and efficiently during the night, digests its "blood meal" while resting on the walls of the house, and then slips away in the morning. In epidemiology, there is a concept known as the "basic reproduction number," or BRN, which refers to the number of people one person can infect with a contagious disease. The number for H.I.V., which is relatively difficult to transmit, is just above one. For measles, the BRN is between twelve and fourteen. But with a vector like *gambiae* in the picture the BRN for malaria can be more than a hundred, meaning that just one malarious person can be solely responsible for making a hundred additional people sick. The short answer to the question of why malaria is such an overwhelming problem in Africa is that *gambiae* is an African mosquito.

In March, 1930, a Rockefeller Foundation entomologist named Raymond Shannon was walking across tidal flats to the Potengi River, in Natal, Brazil, when he noticed, to his astonishment, two thousand *gambiae* larvae in a pool of water, thousands of miles from their homeland. Less than a kilometre away was a port where French destroyers brought mail across the Atlantic from Africa, and Shannon guessed that the mosquito larvae had come over, fairly recently, aboard one of the mail ships. He notified Soper, who was his boss, and Soper told Brazilian officials to open the dykes damming the tidal flats, because salt water from the ocean would destroy the *gambiae* breeding spots. The government refused. Over the next few years, there were a number of small yet worrisome outbreaks of malaria, followed by a few years of drought, which kept the problem in check. Then, in 1938, the worst malaria epidemic in the history of the Americas broke out. *Gambiae* had spread a hundred and fifty miles along the coast and inland, infecting a hundred thousand people and killing as many as twenty thousand. Soper was called in. This was several years before the arrival of DDT, so he brought with him the only tools malariologists had in those years: diesel oil and an arsenic-based mixture called Paris green, both of which were spread on the pools of water where *gambiae* larvae bred; and pyrethrum, a natural pesticide made from a variety of chrysanthemum, which was used to fumigate buildings. Four thousand men were put at his disposal. He drew maps and divided up his troops. The men wore uniforms, and carried flags to mark where they were working, and they left detailed written records of their actions, to be reviewed later by supervisors. When Soper discovered twelve *gambiae* in a car leaving an infected area, he set up thirty de-insectization posts along the roads, spraying the interiors of cars



"Dry cleaning, pet store, Salvation Army—I'd be lost without my stickies on the dash!"

and trucks; seven more posts on the rail lines; and defumigation posts at the ports and airports. In Soper's personal notes, now housed at the National Library of Medicine, in Bethesda, there is a cue card, on which is typed a quotation from a veteran of the Rockefeller Foundation's efforts, in the early twentieth century, to eradicate hookworm. "Experience proved that the best way to popularize a movement so foreign to the customs of the people . . . was to prosecute it as though it were the only thing in the universe left undone." It is not hard to imagine the card tacked above Soper's desk in Rio for inspiration: his goal was not merely to cripple the population of *gambiae*, since that would simply mean that they would return, to kill again. His goal was to eliminate *gambiae* from every inch of the region of Brazil that they had colonized—an area covering some eighteen thousand square miles. It was an impossible task. Soper did it in twenty-two months.

While DDT was being tested in Orlando, Soper was in North Africa with the United States Typhus Commission, charged with preventing the kind of louse-spread typhus epidemics that were so devastating during the First World War. His tool of choice was a delousing powder called MYL. Lice live in the folds of clothing, and a previous technique had been to treat the clothing after people had disrobed. But that was clearly not feasible in Muslim cities like Cairo and Algiers, nor was it practical for large-scale use. So Soper devised a new technique. He had people tie their garments at the ankles and wrists, and then he put the powder inside a dust gun, of the sort used in gardening, and blew it down the collar, creating a balloon effect. "We were in Algiers, waiting for Patton to get through Sicily," Thomas Aitken, an entomologist who worked with Soper in those years, remembers. "We were dusting people out in the countryside. This particular day, a little old Arab man, only about so high, came along with his donkey and stopped to talk to us. We told him what we were doing, and we dusted him. The next day, he comes by again and says that that had been the first time in his life that he had ever been able to sleep through the night."

In December of 1943, the typhus team was dispatched to Naples, where in the wake of the departing German Army the beginnings of a typhus epidemic had been detected. The rituals of Cairo were repeated, only this time the typhus fighters, instead of relying on MYL (which easily lost its potency), were using DDT. Men with dusters careered through the narrow cobblestoned streets of the town, amid the wreckage of the war, delousing the apartment buildings of typhus victims. Neapolitans were dusted as they came out of the railway stations in the morning, and dusted in the streets, and dusted in the crowded grottoes that served as bomb shelters beneath the city streets. In the first month, more than 1.3 million people were dusted, saving countless lives.

Soper's diary records a growing fascination with this new weapon. July 25, 1943: "Lunch with L.L. Williams and Justin Andrews. L.L. reports that he has ordered 10,000 lbs of Neocid [DDT] and that Barber reports it to be far superior to [Paris green] for mosquitoes." February 25, 1944: "Knipling visits laboratory. Malaria results (for DDT) ARE FANTASTIC." When Rome fell, in mid-1944, Soper declared that he wanted to test DDT in Sardinia, the most malarious part of Italy. In 1947, he got his wish. He pulled out his old organization charts from Brazil. The island—a rocky, mountainous region the size of New Hampshire, with few roads—was mapped and divided up hierarchically, the smallest unit being the area that could be covered by a sprayer in a week. Thirty-three thousand people were hired. More than two hundred and eighty-six tons of DDT were acquired. Three hundred and thirty-seven thousand buildings were sprayed. The target *Anopheles* was *labranchiae*, which flourishes not just in open water but also in the thick weeds that surround the streams and ponds and marshes of Sardinia. Vegetation was cut back, and a hundred thousand acres of swampland were drained. *Labranchiae* larvae were painstakingly collected and counted and shipped to a central laboratory, where precise records were kept of the status of the target vector. In 1946, before the campaign started, there were seventy-five thousand malaria cases on the island. In 1951, after the campaign finished, there were nine.

"The locals regarded this as the best thing that had ever happened to them," Thomas Aitken says. He had signed on with the Rockefeller Foundation after the war, and was one of the leaders of the Sardinian effort. "The fact that malaria was gone was welcome," he went on. "But also the DDT got rid of the houseflies. Sardinian houses were made of stone. The wires for the lights ran along the walls near the ceiling. And if you looked up at the wires they were black with housefly droppings from over the years. And suddenly the flies disappeared." Five years ago, Aitken says, he was invited back to Sardinia for a celebration to mark the forty-fifth anniversary of malaria's eradication from the island. "There was a big meeting at our hotel. The public was invited, as well as a whole bunch of island and city officials, the mayor of Cagliari, and representatives of the Italian government. We all sat on a dais, at the side of the room, and I gave a speech there, in Italian, and when I finished everybody got up and clapped their hands and was shouting. It was very embarrassing. I started crying. I couldn't help it. Just reminiscing now . . ."

Aitken is a handsome, courtly man of eighty-eight, lean and patrician in appearance. He lives outside New Haven, in an apartment filled with art and furniture from his time in Sardinia. As he thought back to those years, there were tears in his eyes, and at that moment it was possible to appreciate the excitement that gripped malariologists in the wake of the Second World War. The old-school mosquito men called themselves mud-hen malariologists, because they did their job in swamps and ditches and stagnant pools of water. Paris green and pyrethrum were crude insecticides that had to be applied repeatedly; pyrethrum killed only those mosquitoes that happened to be in the room when you were spraying. But here, seemingly, was a clean, pure, perfectly modern weapon. You could spray a tiny amount on a wall, and that single application would kill virtually every mosquito landing on that surface for the next six months. Who needed a standing army of inspectors anymore? Who needed to slog through swamps? This was an age of heroics in medicine. Sabin and Salk were working on polio vaccines with an eye to driving that disease to extinction. Penicillin was brand new, and so effective that epidemiologists were dreaming of an America without venereal disease. The extinction of smallpox, that oldest of scourges, seemed possible. All the things that we find sinister about DDT today—the fact that it killed everything it touched, and kept on killing everything it touched—were precisely what made it so inspiring at the time. "The public-health service didn't pay us a lot," says McWilson Warren, who spent the early part of his career fighting malaria in the Malaysian jungle. "So why were we there? Because there was something so wonderful about being involved with people who thought they were doing something more important than themselves." In the middle of the war, Soper had gone to Egypt, and warned the government that it had an incipient invasion of *gambiae*. The government ignored him, and the next year the country was hit with an epidemic that left more than a hundred thousand dead. In his diary, Soper wrote of his subsequent trip to Egypt, "In the afternoon to the Palace where Mr. Jacobs presents me to His Majesty King Faruk. The King says that he is sorry to know that measures I suggested last year were not taken at that time." Soper had triumphed over *gambiae* in Brazil, driven lice from Cairo and Naples, and had a weapon, DDT, that seemed like a gift from God—and now kings were apologizing to him. Soper started to dream big: Why not try to drive malaria from the entire world?

Fred Soper's big idea came to be known as the Global Malaria Eradication Programme. In the early nineteen-fifties, Soper had been instrumental in getting the Brazilian malariologist Marcolino Candau—whom he had hired during the anti-*gambiae* campaign of the nineteen-thirties—elected as director-general of the World Health Organization, and, in 1955, with Candau's help, Soper pushed through a program calling on all member nations to begin a rigorous assault on any malaria within their borders. Congress was lobbied, and John Kennedy, then a senator, became an enthusiastic backer. Beginning in 1958, the United States government pledged the equivalent of billions in today's dollars for malaria eradication—one of the biggest commitments that a single country has ever made to international health. The appeal of the eradication strategy was its precision. The idea was not to kill every *Anopheles* mosquito in a given area, as Soper had done with *gambiae* in Brazil. That was unnecessary. The idea was to use DDT to kill only those mosquitoes which were directly connected to the spread of malaria—only those which had just picked up the malaria parasite from an infected person and were about to fly off and infect someone else. When DDT is used for this purpose, Spielman writes in "Mosquito," "it is

"Perhaps this will refresh your memory, Mr. Conklin."

applied close to where people sleep, on the inside walls of houses. After biting, the mosquitoes generally fly to the nearest vertical surface and remain standing there for about an hour, anus down, while they drain the water from their gut contents and excrete it in a copious, pink-tinged stream. If the surfaces the mosquitoes repair to are coated by a poison that is soluble in the wax that covers all insects' bodies, the mosquitoes will acquire a lethal dose." Soper pointed out that people who get malaria, and survive, generally clear their bodies of the parasite after three years. If you could use spraying to create a hiatus during which minimal transmission occurred—and during which anyone carrying the parasite had a chance to defeat it—you could potentially eradicate malaria. You could stop spraying and welcome the mosquitoes back, because there would be no more malaria around for them to transmit. Soper was under no illusions about how difficult this task would be. But, according to his calculations, it was technically possible, if he and his team achieved eighty-per-cent coverage—if they sprayed eight out of every ten houses in infected areas.

Beginning in the late fifties, DDT was shipped out by the ton. Training institutes were opened. In India alone, a hundred and fifty thousand people were hired. By 1960, sixty-six nations had signed up. "What we all had was a handheld pressure sprayer of three-gallon capacity," Jesse Hobbs, who helped run the eradication effort in Jamaica in the early sixties, recalls. "Generally, we used a formulation that was water wettable, meaning you had powder you mixed with water. Then you pressurized the tank. The squad chief would usually have notified the household some days before. The instructions were to take the pictures off the wall, pull everything away from the wall. Take the food and eating utensils out of the house. The spray man would spray with an up-and-down movement—at a certain speed, according to a pattern. You started at a certain point and sprayed the walls and ceiling, then went outside to spray the eaves of the roof. A spray man could cover ten to twelve houses a day. You were using about two hundred milligrams per square foot of DDT, which isn't very much, and it was formulated in a way that you could see where you sprayed. When it dried, it left a deposit, like chalk. It had a bit of a chlorine smell. It's not perfume. It's kind of like swimming-pool water. People were told to wait half an hour for the spray to dry, then they could go back." The results were dramatic. In Taiwan, much of the Caribbean, the Balkans, parts of northern Africa, the northern region of Australia, and a large swath of the South Pacific, malaria was eliminated. Sri Lanka saw its cases drop to about a dozen every year. In India, where malaria infected an estimated seventy-five million and killed eight hundred thousand every year, fatalities had dropped to zero by the early sixties. Between 1945 and 1965, DDT saved millions—even tens of millions—of lives around the world, perhaps more than any other man-made drug or chemical before or since.

"Fun can happen to adults, too."

What DDT could not do, however, was eradicate malaria entirely. How could you effectively spray eighty per cent of homes in the Amazonian jungle, where communities are spread over hundreds of thousands of highly treacherous acres? Sub-Saharan Africa, the most malarious place on earth, presented such a daunting logistical challenge that the eradication campaign never really got under way there. And, even in countries that seemed highly amenable to spraying, problems arose. "The rich had houses that they didn't want to be sprayed, and they were giving bribes," says Socrates Litsios, who was a scientist with the W.H.O. for many years and is now a historian of the period. "The inspectors would try to double their spraying in the morning so they wouldn't have to carry around the heavy tanks all day, and as a result houses in the afternoon would get less coverage. And there were many instances of corruption with insecticides, because they were worth so much on the black market. People would apply diluted sprays even when they knew they were worthless." Typical of the logistical difficulties is what happened to the campaign in Malaysia. In Malaysian villages, the roofs of the houses were a thatch of palm fronds called atap. They were expensive to construct, and usually lasted five years. But within two years of

DDT spraying the roofs started to fall down. As it happened, the atap is eaten by caterpillar larvae, which in turn are normally kept in check by parasitic wasps. But the DDT repelled the wasps, leaving the larvae free to devour the atap. "Then the Malaysians started to complain about bedbugs, and it turns out what normally happens is that ants like to eat bedbug larvae," McWilson Warren said. "But the ants were being killed by the DDT and the bedbugs weren't—they were pretty resistant to it. So now you had a bedbug problem." He went on, "The DDT spray teams would go into villages, and no one would be at home and the doors would be locked and you couldn't spray the house. And, understand, for that campaign to work almost every house had to be sprayed. You had to have eighty-per-cent coverage. I remember there was a malaria meeting in '62 in Saigon, and the Malaysians were saying that they could not eradicate malaria. It was not possible. And everyone was arguing with them, and they were saying, 'Look, it's not going to work.' And if Malaysia couldn't do it—and Malaysia was one of the most sophisticated places in the region—who could?"

At the same time, in certain areas DDT began to lose its potency. DDT kills by attacking a mosquito's nervous system, affecting the nerve cells so that they keep firing and the insect goes into a spasm, lurching, shuddering, and twitching before it dies. But in every population of mosquitoes there are a handful with a random genetic mutation that renders DDT nontoxic—that prevents it from binding to nerve endings. When mass spraying starts, those genetic outliers are too rare to matter. But, as time goes on, they are the only mosquitoes still breeding, and entire new generations of insects become resistant. In Greece, in the late nineteen-forties, for example, a malariologist noticed *Anopheles sacharovi* mosquitoes flying around a room that had been sprayed with DDT. In time, resistance began to emerge in areas where spraying was heaviest. To the malaria warriors, it was a shock. "Why should they have known?" Janet Hemingway, an expert in DDT resistance at the University of Wales in Cardiff, says. "It was the first synthetic insecticide. They just assumed that it would keep on working, and that the insects couldn't do much about it." Soper and the malariologist Paul Russell, who was his great ally, responded by pushing for an all-out war on malaria. We had to use DDT, they argued, or lose it. "If countries, due to lack of funds, have to proceed slowly, resistance is almost certain to appear and eradication will become economically impossible," Russell wrote in a 1956 report. "TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE because DDT resistance has appeared in six or seven years." But, with the administrative and logistical problems posed by the goal of eighty-per-cent coverage, that deadline proved impossible to meet.

In 1963, the money from Congress ran out. Countries that had been told they could wipe out malaria in four years—and had diverted much of their health budgets to that effort—grew disillusioned as the years dragged on and eradication never materialized. Soon, they put their money back into areas that seemed equally pressing, like maternal and child health. Spraying programs were scaled back. In those countries where the disease had not been completely eliminated, malaria rates began to inch upward. In 1969, the World Health Organization formally abandoned global eradication, and in the ensuing years it proved impossible to muster any great enthusiasm from donors to fund antimalaria efforts. The W.H.O. now recommends that countries treat the disease largely through the health-care system—through elimination of the parasite—but many antimalarial drugs are no longer effective. In the past thirty years, there have been outbreaks in India, Sri Lanka, Brazil, and South Korea, among other places. "Our troubles with mosquitoes are getting worse," Spielman concludes in "Mosquito," "making more people sick and claiming more lives, millions of lives, every year."

For Soper, the unravelling of his dream was pure torture. In 1959, he toured Asia to check on the eradication campaigns of Thailand, the Philippines, Ceylon, and India, and came back appalled at what he had seen. Again and again, he found, countries were executing his strategy improperly. They weren't spraying for long enough. They didn't realize that unless malaria was ground into submission it would come roaring back. But what could he do? He had prevailed against *gambiae* in Brazil in the nineteen-thirties because he had been in charge; he had worked with the country's dictator to make it illegal to prevent an inspector from entering a house, and illegal to prevent the inspector from treating any open container of water. Jesse Hobbs tells of running into Soper one day in Trinidad, after driving all day in an open jeep through the tropical heat. Soper drove up in a car and asked Hobbs to get in; Hobbs demurred, gesturing at his sweaty shirt. "Son," Soper responded, "we used to go out in a day like this in Brazil and if we found a sector chief whose shirt was *not* wet we'd fire him." Killing mosquitoes, Soper always said, was not a matter of knowledge and academic understanding; it was a matter of administration and discipline. "He used to say that if you have a democracy you can't have eradication," Litsios says. "When Soper was looking for a job at Johns Hopkins—this would have been '46—he told a friend that 'they turned me down because they said I was a fascist.' " Johns Hopkins was right, of course: he was a fascist—a disease fascist—because he believed a malaria warrior had to be. But now roofs were falling down in Malaysia, and inspectors were taking bribes, and local health officials did not understand the basic principles of eradication—and his critics had the audacity to blame his ideas, rather than their own weakness.

It was in this same period that Rachel Carson published "Silent Spring," taking aim at the environmental consequences of DDT. "The world has heard much of the triumphant war against disease through the control of insect vectors of infection," she wrote, alluding to the efforts of men like Soper, "but it has heard little of the other side of the story—the defeats, the short-lived triumphs that now strongly support the alarming view that the insect enemy has been made actually stronger by our efforts." There had already been "warnings," she wrote, of the problems created by pesticides:

> On Nissan Island in the South Pacific, for example, spraying had been carried on intensively during the Second World War, but was

> stopped when hostilities came to an end. Soon swarms of a malaria-carrying mosquito reinvaded the island. All of its predators had been killed off and there had not been time for new populations to become established. The way was therefore clear for a tremendous population explosion. Marshall Laird, who had described this incident, compares chemical control to a treadmill; once we have set foot on it we are unable to stop for fear of the consequences.

It is hard to read that passage and not feel the heat of Soper's indignation. He was familiar with "Silent Spring"—everyone in the malaria world was—and what was Carson saying? Of course the mosquitoes came back when DDT spraying stopped. The question was whether the mosquitoes were gone long enough to disrupt the cycle of malaria transmission. The whole point of eradication, to his mind, was that it got you *off* the treadmill: DDT was so effective that if you used it properly you could stop spraying and not fear the consequences. Hadn't that happened in places like Taiwan and Jamaica and Sardinia?

"Silent Spring" was concerned principally with the indiscriminate use of DDT for agricultural purposes; in the nineteen-fifties, it was being sprayed like water in the Western countryside, in an attempt to control pests like the gypsy moth and the spruce budworm. Not all of Carson's concerns about the health effects of DDT have stood the test of time—it has yet to be conclusively linked to human illness—but her larger point was justified: DDT was being used without concern for its environmental consequences. It must have galled Soper, however, to see how Carson effectively lumped the malaria warriors with those who used DDT for economic gain. Nowhere in "Silent Spring" did Carson acknowledge that the chemical she was excoriating as a menace had, in the two previous decades, been used by malariologists to save somewhere in the vicinity of ten million lives. Nor did she make it clear how judiciously the public-health community was using the chemical. By the late fifties, health experts weren't drenching fields and streams and poisoning groundwater and killing fish. They were leaving a microscopic film on the inside walls of houses; spraying every house in a country the size of Guyana, for example, requires no more DDT in a year than a large cotton farm does. Carson quoted a housewife from Hinsdale, Illinois, who wrote about the damage left by several years of DDT spraying against bark beetles: "The town is almost devoid of robins and starlings; chickadees have not been on my shelf for two years, and this year the cardinals are gone too; the nesting population in the neighborhood seems to consist of one dove pair and perhaps one catbird family. . . . 'Will they ever come back?' [the children] ask, and I do not have the answer." Carson then quoted a bird-lover from Alabama: "There was not a sound of the song of a bird. It was eerie, terrifying. What was man doing to our perfect and beautiful world?" But to Soper the world was neither perfect nor beautiful, and the question of what man could do to nature was less critical than what nature, unimpeded, could do to man. Here, from a well-thumbed page inserted in Soper's diaries, is a description of a town in Egypt during that country's *gambiae* invasion of 1943—a village in the grip of its own, very different, unnatural silence:

> Most houses are without roofs. They are just a square of dirty earth. In those courtyards and behind the doors of these hovels were found whole families lying on the floor; some were just too weakened by illness to get up and others were lying doubled up shaking from head to foot with their teeth chattering and their violently trembling hands trying in vain to draw some dirty rags around them for warmth. They were in the middle of the malaria crisis. There was illness in every house. There was hardly a house which had not had its dead and those who were left were living skeletons, their old clothing in rags, their limbs swollen from undernourishment and too weak to go into the fields to work or even to get food.

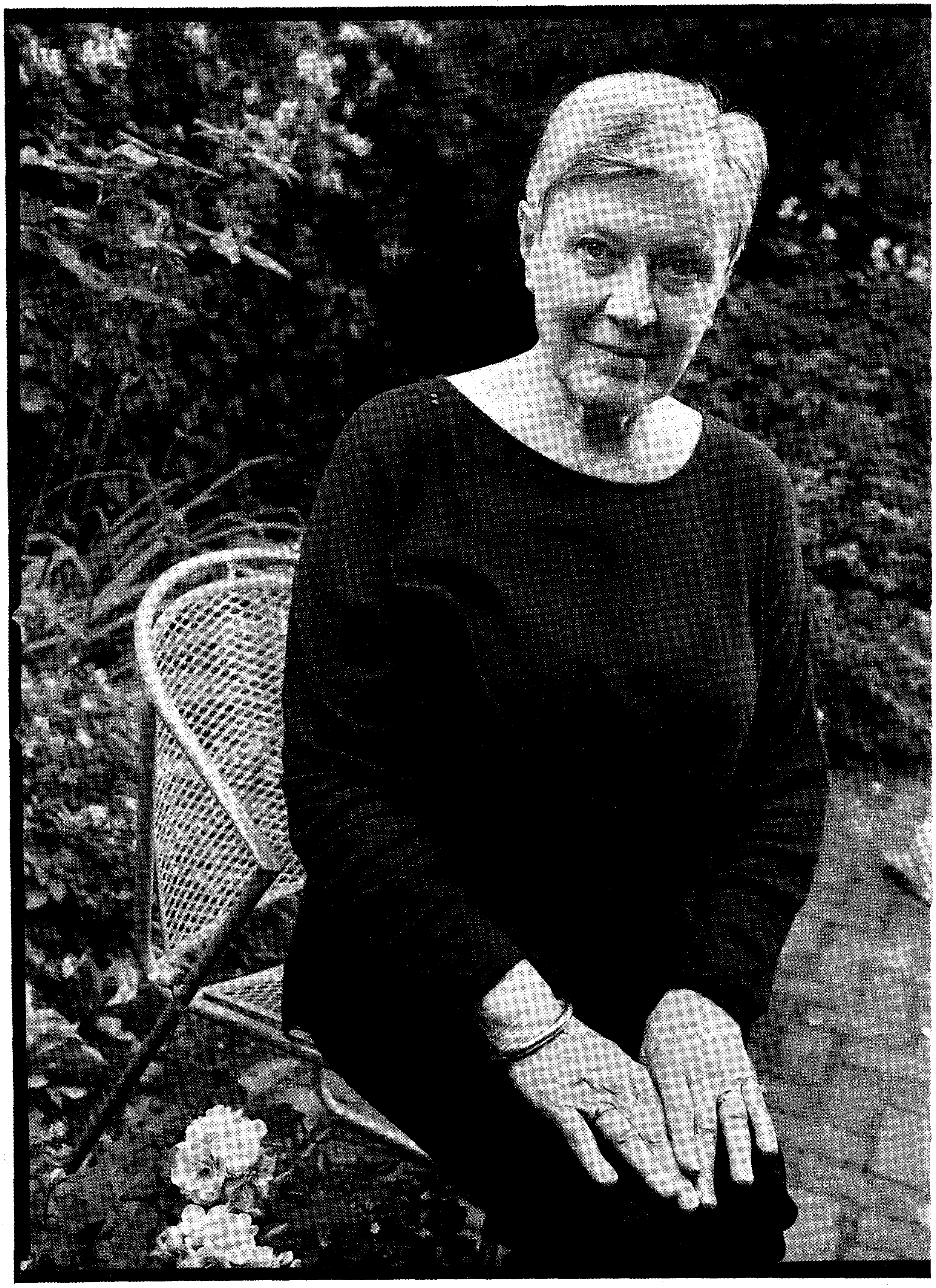
It must have seemed to Soper that the ground had shifted beneath his feet—that the absolutes that governed his life, that countenanced even the most extreme of measures in the fight against disease, had suddenly and bewilderingly been set aside. "I was on several groups who evaluated malaria-eradication programs in some of the Central American countries and elsewhere," Geoffrey Jeffery recalls. "Several times we came back with the answer that with the present technology and effort it wasn't going to work. Well, that didn't suit Soper very much. He harangued us. We shouldn't be saying things like that!" Wilbur Downs, a physician who worked for the Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico in the fifties, used to tell of a meeting with Soper and officials of the Mexican government about the eradication of malaria in that country. Soper had come down from Washington, and amid excited talk of ending malaria forever Downs pointed out that there were serious obstacles to eradication—among them the hastened decomposition and absorption of DDT by the clays forming adobe walls. It was all too much for Soper. This was the kind of talk that was impeding eradication—the doubting, the equivocation, the incompetence, the elevation of songbirds over human life. In the middle of the meeting, Soper—ramrod straight, eyes afire—strode over to Downs, put both his hands around his neck, and began to shake.

Fred Soper ran up against the great moral of the late twentieth century—that even the best-intentioned efforts have perverse consequences, that benefits are inevitably offset by risks. This was the lesson of "Silent Spring," and it was the lesson, too, that malariologists would take from the experience with global eradication. DDT, Spielman argues, ought to be used as selectively as possible, to quell major outbreaks. "They should have had a strong rule against spraying the same villages again and again," he says. "But that went against their doctrine. They wanted eighty-per-cent coverage. They wanted eight out of ten houses year after year after year, and that's a sure formula for resistance." Soper and Russell once argued about whether, in addition to house spraying, malaria fighters should continue to drain swamps. Russell said yes; Soper said no, that it would be an unnecessary distraction. Russell was right: it made no sense to use only one weapon against malaria. Spielman points out that malaria transmission in sub-Saharan Africa is powerfully affected by the fact that so many people live in mud huts. The walls of that kind of house need to be constantly replastered, and to do that villagers dig mud holes around their huts. But a mud hole is a prime breeding spot for *gambiae*. If economic aid were directed at helping villagers build houses out of brick, Spielman argues, malaria could be dealt a blow. Similarly, the Princeton University malariologist Burton Singer says that since the forties it has been well known that mosquito larvae that hatch in rice fields—a major breeding site in southeast Asia—can be killed if the water level in the fields is intermittently drained, a practice that has the additional effect of raising rice yields. Are these perfect measures? No. But, under the right circumstances, they are sustainable. In a speech Soper presented on eradication, he quoted Louis Pasteur: "It is within the power of man to rid himself of every parasitic disease." The key phrase, for Soper, was "within the power." Soper believed that the responsibility of the public-health professional was to make an obligation out of what was possible. He never understood that concessions had to be made to what was practical. "This is the fundamental difference between those of us in public health who have an epidemiological perspective, and people, like Soper, with more of a medical approach," Spielman says. "We deal with populations over time, populations of individuals. They deal with individuals at a moment in time. Their best outcome is total elimination of the condition in the shortest possible period. Our first goal is to cause no outbreaks, no epidemics, to manage, to contain the infection." Bringing the absolutist attitudes of medicine to a malarious village, Spielman says, "is a good way to do a bad thing." The Fred Soper that we needed, in retrospect, was a man of more modest ambitions.

"Thar's the flag we'll fly atop our pirate ship!"

• •

But, of course, Fred Soper with modest ambitions would not be Fred Soper; his epic achievements arose from his fanaticism, his absolutism, his commitment to saving as many lives as possible in the shortest period of time. For all the talk of his misplaced ambition, there are few people in history to whom so many owe their lives. The Global Malaria Eradication Programme helped eliminate the disease from the developed world, and from many parts of the developing world. In a number of cases where the disease returned, it came back at a lower level than it had been in the prewar years, and even in those places where eradication made little headway the campaign sometimes left in place a public infrastructure that had not existed before. The problem was that Soper had raised expectations too high. He had said that the only acceptable outcome for Global Eradication was global eradication, and when that did not happen he was judged—and, most important, he judged himself—a failure. But isn't the urgency Soper felt just what is lacking in the reasonableness of our contemporary attitude—in our caution and thoughtfulness and restraint? In the wake of the failure of eradication, it was popular to say that truly effective malaria control would have to await the development of a public-health infrastructure in poorer countries. Soper's response was, invariably: What about now? In a letter to a friend, he snapped, "The delay in handling malaria until it can be done by local health units is needlessly sacrificing the generation now living." There is something to admire in that attitude; it is hard to look at the devastation wrought by H.I.V. and malaria and countless other diseases in the Third World and not conclude that what we need, more than anything, is someone who will marshal the troops, send them house to house, monitor their every movement, direct their every success, and, should a day of indifference leave their shirts unsullied, send them packing. Toward the end of his life, Soper, who died in 1975, met with an old colleague, M. A. Farid, with whom he had fought *gambiae* in Egypt years before. "How do things go?" Soper began. "Bad!" Farid replied, for this was in the years when everyone had turned against Soper's vision. "Who will be our ally?" Soper asked. And Farid said simply, "Malaria," and Soper, he remembered, almost hugged him, because it was clear what Farid meant: Someday, when DDT is dead and buried, and the West wakes up to a world engulfed by malaria, we will think back on Fred Soper and wish we had another to take his place. ♦



PERSONAL HISTORY

WHOSE LITTLE GIRL ARE YOU?

A childhood in another time.

BY PAULA FOX

The Reverend Elwood Corning, the Congregational minister who took care of me in my infancy and earliest years and whom I called Uncle Elwood, always saw to it that I didn't look down and out. Twice a year, in the spring and fall, he bought a few things for me to wear, spending what he could from the yearly salary paid to him by his church. Other clothes came my way donated by the mothers in his congregation whose own children had outgrown them. They were mended, washed, and ironed before they were handed on.

In early April of 1928, before my fifth birthday, my father mailed Uncle Elwood two five-dollar bills and a note. I can see him reading the note as he holds it and the bills in one hand, while with the index finger of the other he presses the bridge of his eyeglasses against his nose, because he has broken the sidepiece. This particularity of memory can be partly attributed to the rarity of my father's notes—not to mention enclosures of money—or else to the new dress that part of the ten dollars paid for. Or so I imagine.

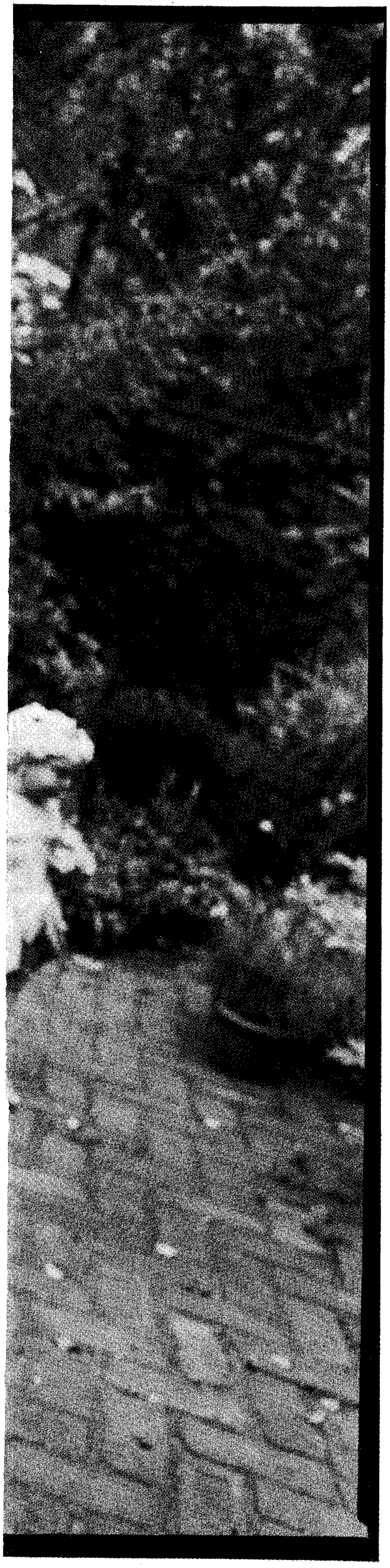
The next morning, Uncle Elwood drove me in his old Packard from the Victorian house on the hill in Balmville, New York, where we lived, to Newburgh, a valley town half an hour and a dozen miles north of the Storm King promontory, which sinks into the Hudson River like an elephant's brow. Our destination was Schoonmaker's department store, next to the barbershop. When we left the store, Uncle Elwood was carrying a box that contained a white dotted-swiss dress. It had a Peter Pan collar and fell straight to its hem from a smocked yoke.

Uncle Elwood had written a poem for me to recite at the Easter service in the church where he preached. Now I had something new to wear, something in which I could stand before the congregation and speak his words. I loved him, and I loved the dotted-swiss dress.

Years later, when I read through the few letters and notes my father had written to Uncle Elwood, I realized that Daddy had played the coquette in his apologetic notes about his remissness in supporting me. His excuses had a kind of fraudulent heartiness, as though he were boasting, not confessing. His handwriting, though, was beautiful, an orderly flight of birds across the yellowing pages.

On Sundays, Uncle Elwood usually made parish visits in Washingtonville, seventeen miles from Balmville, where most of the members of his congregation lived. In Washingtonville, we sometimes called upon Emma Board and her family. I felt a kind of happiness there and, at the same time, an apprehension—like that of a traveller who returns to a country where she once endured inexplicable suffering.

I had been left in a Manhattan foundling home a few days after my birth by my reluctant father, Paul, and Elsie, my nineteen-year-old mother, panic-stricken and ungovernable in her haste to have done with me. After depositing me at the home, they went to Provincetown, where my father was studying playwriting with the Provincetown Players, a group of actors and dramatists who included Eugene O'Neill. One of my father's plays, "Soldiers and Women," was a minor success on Broadway. Years later, he went to Hollywood to write screenplays. I heard the tale of my birth decades later from Brewster, one of Emma Board's two sons; he had lived in New



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARY ELLEN MARK

The author at her home in Brooklyn. "I had landed in the hands of rescuers, a fire brigade that passed me along from person to person until I was safe."

York City with Leopold, one of my mother's four brothers.

My maternal grandmother, Candelaria, during a brief visit to New York City from Cuba, where she lived on a sugar plantation most of the year, inquired of Leopold the whereabouts of his sister and the baby she knew had been born a few weeks earlier. He said he didn't know where my parents had gone, but that over his objections they had placed me in a foundling home before leaving town.

When she heard where I was, my grandmother went at once to the home and took me away. But what could she do with me? She was obliged to return to Cuba within days. For a small monthly stipend, she served as companion to a rich old cousin, the plantation owner, who was subject to fits of lunacy.

Brewster suggested that she hand me over to his family. His mother was sick with the Spanish flu and couldn't care for me, so his eldest sister, Katherine, who had just married, took me along with her and her new husband to Norfolk, Virginia, on a brief honeymoon. When they returned, her mother was sufficiently recovered to take care of an infant.

I was two months old when I arrived at the Boards' house. By chance, by good fortune, I had landed in the hands of rescuers, a fire brigade that passed me along from person to person until I was safe. For a very short period of my infancy, I belonged in that house with that family.

And so, when Uncle Elwood and I made our visits there after church, I would go down the cellar steps and see if a brown rattan baby buggy and a creaking old crib, used at one time or another by all the Board children and for three months by me, were still stored there. I think the family kept them so I would always find them.

I was five months old when the minister came by one Sunday to look at me. He had heard of my presence in Washingtonville and the singular way I had arrived—an event that had ruffled the nearly motionless, pondlike surface of village life—and knew the uncertainty of my future, for the Boards, like most of their neighbors in those years, were poor. I was awake in the crib. I might have smiled up at Uncle Elwood. In any event, I aroused his interest and compassion. He offered to take me, and, partly owing to their straitened circumstances, the Boards agreed to let me go.

One early afternoon—I had not yet learned to read—I was sitting on a step below the landing, an open book on my lap, inventing a story to fit the illustrations. It was raining. From the little table in a dark corner at the foot of the staircase, the telephone rang. Uncle Elwood came from his study to answer it. "Mr. Fox?" he asked in a surprised voice.

I flew up the stairs to my room, closed the door, and got under the bedclothes. Soon Uncle Elwood knocked on the door. The call had been from my father, who was in Newburgh and about to take a cab to Balmville. "Won't you open your door?" he asked me.

The word "father" was outlandish. I was transfixed by it. It was as though I had emerged from a dark wood into the sudden glare of headlights. I wandered into the hall, pausing before a large painting I had seen a thousand times, a landscape of the Hudson Valley. Dreaming my way into it, I walked among the hills, halted at a waterfall that hung from the lip of a cliff; in the glen below there was an Indian village, feathery columns of smoke rising straight up from tepees. The painting was bathed in an autumnal light as yellow as butter, the river composed of tiny regular waves that resembled newly combed blue-gray hair, gleaming as though oiled.

I heard loud steps on the porch. My father burst through the doors carrying a big cardboard box. He didn't see me in the shadowed hall as he looked around for a place to set down the box.

In those few seconds, I took in everything about him: his physical awkwardness, his height—he loomed like a flagpole in the dim light—his fair curly hair all tumbled about his head, and his attire, odd to me, consisting of a wool jacket different in fabric and pattern from his trousers. He caught sight of me, dropped the box on the floor, its unsealed flaps parting to reveal a number of books, and exclaimed "There you are!" as if I'd been missing for such a long time that he'd almost given up searching for me. Then—at last!—I'd turned up in this old house.

I felt compelled to smile, though I didn't know why.

I bent toward the books. I guessed by their bright colors that they were meant for me. Eventually Uncle Elwood read them all aloud: "Robin Hood," "King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table," "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," "The Water-Babies," "Aesop's Fables," "A Child's Garden of Verses," "The Jungle Book," and "Treasure Island."

At some happy moment, I lost all caution. When my father got down on all fours, I rode on his back.

It was twilight when he left. The rain had stopped. As he turned around on the bottom porch step to hold up his arm in a salute that seemed to take in the world, and before he stepped into the taxi he'd ordered to return for him, the sun emerged from a thick cloud cover and cast its reddish glow over his face as though he'd ordered that, too.

The next morning, I woke at first daylight and ran down the staircase to the living room in my nightclothes, knowing that—despite my wish to find him there—I wouldn't.

Car headlights shone on ranks of stunted pine trees and clumps of small weathered gray houses, silent, silvered for an instant as we drove past them. Who was driving, Uncle Elwood or my father, I can't recall. We were on our way to Provincetown, where my parents were living in a house on Commercial Street. I was five years old.

The house, a saltbox, was set back from the street a few hundred feet, on the knobby, undernourished ground characteristic of land near salt water. I have a snapshot of myself standing in front of a straggly rosebush growing on an old trellis in the yard, its stems like insect feelers. There is also a photograph of Uncle Elwood and me by the bay. He kneels to hold me around the waist, although the water is as flat as an ironing board. I suppose my father took the picture with the minister's camera.

I discovered a steamer trunk in a little room next to the kitchen. It was on end and partly open, like a giant book waiting to be read. Deep drawers lined one side. Suits and dresses hung in the other. They looked as though they'd been pitched across the room, arrested in their flight by small hangers attached to a metal bar, to which they clung, half on, half off.

I had never seen so many women's

clothes before. I touched them, felt them, pressed against them, breathing in their close bodily smell until I grew dizzy. I pulled open a drawer and discovered a pile of cosmetics.

I hardly knew what they were for, and began to experiment, my memories stirring of Uncle Elwood's mother asking that her face be powdered when she was about to be taken for an outing in the car, and of a large powder puff in his hand as he bent toward her face, and of the lips of some of his parishioners, too red to be true.

My mother was suddenly in the room, as though deposited there by a violent wind. I gasped with embarrassment and fear. She began to speak; I saw her lips move. I bent toward her, feeling the fiery skin of my face.

"What are you doing?" she was asking me over and over again. I heard her repeat "doing . . . doing" in the same measured voice as she stared at my forehead covered with her powder, at my mouth, enlarged and thickened with lip rouge.

I began to cry silently. Her face loomed in front of mine like a dark moon. She began to whisper with a kind of ferocity, "Don't cry! Don't you dare! Don't! Don't cry!"

I covered my face with my hands. She pushed in the trunk drawers and straightened the clothes. I sensed that if she could have kept it a secret she would have killed me.

I stood there, waiting for permission to stay or to leave. She left the room as though I weren't there.

There was a party that evening. The noise of it came up the narrow stairs to the alcove where I lay on a cot, listening. It was like the sound of the ocean roaring in a seashell.

A year or so later, my parents were staying temporarily—their arrangements, as far as I could work out, were always temporary—in a small borrowed apartment in New York City. The minister arranged to leave me with them for a few hours and then return to take me home.

A large dog lay on the floor, its eyes watchful. It got up to sniff my shoes. My father filled in the silence with his voice. I wasn't listening to him. Where was my mother?

Suddenly she appeared in the doorway that led to a second room. I saw an unmade bed behind her. She pressed one hand against the door frame. The other was holding a drink. My father's tone changed; his voice was barely above a whisper. "Puppy . . . puppy . . . puppy," he called to her softly, as though he feared, but hoped, to wake her. She stared at me, her eyes like embers.

All at once she flung the glass and its contents in my direction. Water and pieces of ice slid down my arms and over my dress. The dog crouched at my feet. My father was in the doorway, holding my mother tight in his arms. Then he took me away from the apartment.

At some hour he must have returned with me. Perhaps we waited for the minister outside the front door.

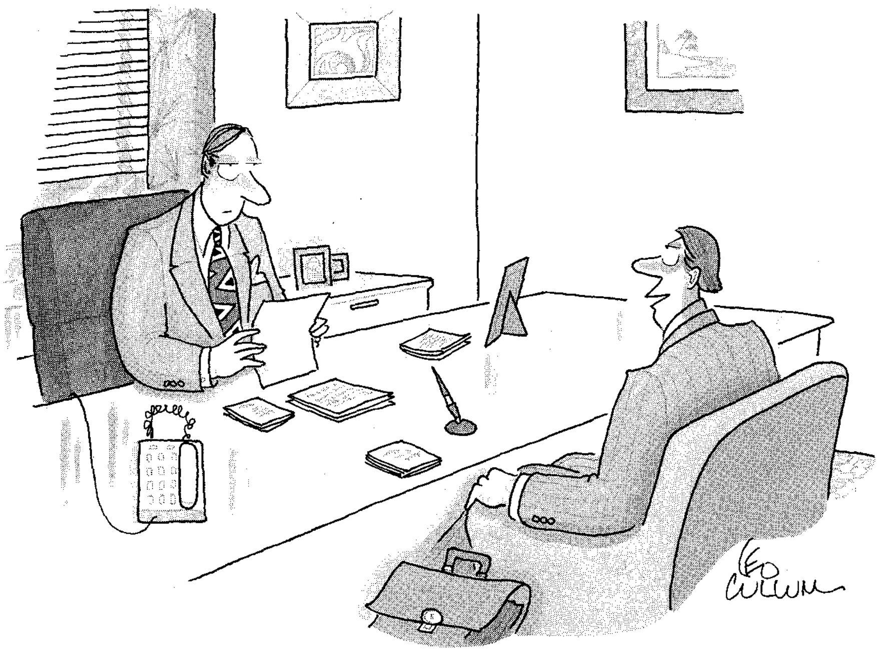
For years I assumed responsibility for all that happened in my life, even for events over which I had not the slightest control. It was not out of generosity of mind or spirit that I did so. Yet I would never discover why my birth and my existence were so calamitous for my mother.

Uncle Elwood took me to the city again to visit my parents. This time they were staying in a hotel owned by a family they were acquainted with, whose wealth, my father explained to me, included land tracts on the west side of the Hudson River, just north of the Palisades. I was to stay overnight—the family provided a room for me across the corridor from my parents'.

The idea of spending so much time with them filled me with alarm. The visit began cheerfully, though a malaise gripped me as soon as I saw them together in the hotel room. I mistook the feeling for excitement.

Humorously, my parents suggested that I should marry the son of the hotel owners, a boy only a year or so older than I was. They would arrange the marriage first thing in the morning, they promised, both smiling broadly. I strained to match their mood. It would be like the marriages of children in India. I had seen such children in an issue of *National Geographic*. They looked so little. They wore bands of jewels across their brows and large brilliant-colored flowers behind their ears.

Evening approached. The dark filled up the airshaft of my parents' room, on the fourteenth floor. My father asked me what I would like for supper; he would order it from room service. My experience was only with the minister's cooking. "Lamb chop and peas," I said. Somehow I felt that this was a special occasion: hotel rooms, Paul and Elsie, so tall, so slender, both, a marriage planned for the future so I would be able to live in this room for years, the excitement of great things about to happen. We hardly



"Will my office be near an ice machine?"

ever had lamb chops at Uncle Elwood's house, though we often had little canned peas. When the tray was delivered by a waiter, I looked at it and saw I had forgotten something.

"There's no milk," I observed.

At once, my father carried the tray to the window, opened it, and dropped the tray into the airshaft.

As I stood there stunned by what my father had done—nothing Elsie did ever surprised me—I heard the tray crash. Through tight lips, my father said mildly, "O.K., pal. Since it wasn't to your pleasure . . . " My mother, behind the half-closed door of the bathroom, where she had gone at the very moment he walked to the window, exclaimed, "Paul!" in a muffled voice, as though she were speaking through a towel.

Again, as in the episode of the trunk in Provincetown, I was profoundly embarrassed. But nearly as painful was the gnawing hunger I suddenly felt for that lamb chop lying fourteen stories below.

As the two of them were leaving for the evening, for whatever entertainment, there was a loud knocking at the door. My father opened it to a laughing young man, possessed by what was to me an inexplicable merriment. "Foxes!" he cried, clapping his hands, fluttering and capering, calling out praises to my mother. "Your costume, darling!" My father murmured, "Dick is to keep an eye on you," and at that the young man spotted me and held out his hand, which I took. "Come along, Paula," he called, even though I was standing next to him.

I followed him across the corridor to another room. He threw himself down on one of the twin beds, still smiling. "Well, dear little one. What shall we play?" he said, and immediately closed his eyes and fell asleep. Even if it had not been his purpose, he had rescued me from two incomprehensible people. I looked over at his pretty sleeping face in the other bed, and I was overcome with an emotion I had no word for—a kind of love for a stranger.

In 1928, you could place a child safely in the care of a conductor or a porter. In any event, several months after the Visit of the Dropped Tray, I went to the city on the train and was met at Grand Central Terminal, not by my father but by a married couple, actors, who took me to their tiny apartment, which they shared with two enormous dogs—Great Danes, they told me. A large window in the living room looked out on Central Park.

They both had roles in the Marx Brothers play "Animal Crackers," and except on matinée days they were always at home. They expected my father to "turn up" at any moment, they smilingly told me. I spent two nights with the actors, going to sleep in their bedroom and being carried into the living room and deposited on a sofa when they were ready to retire.

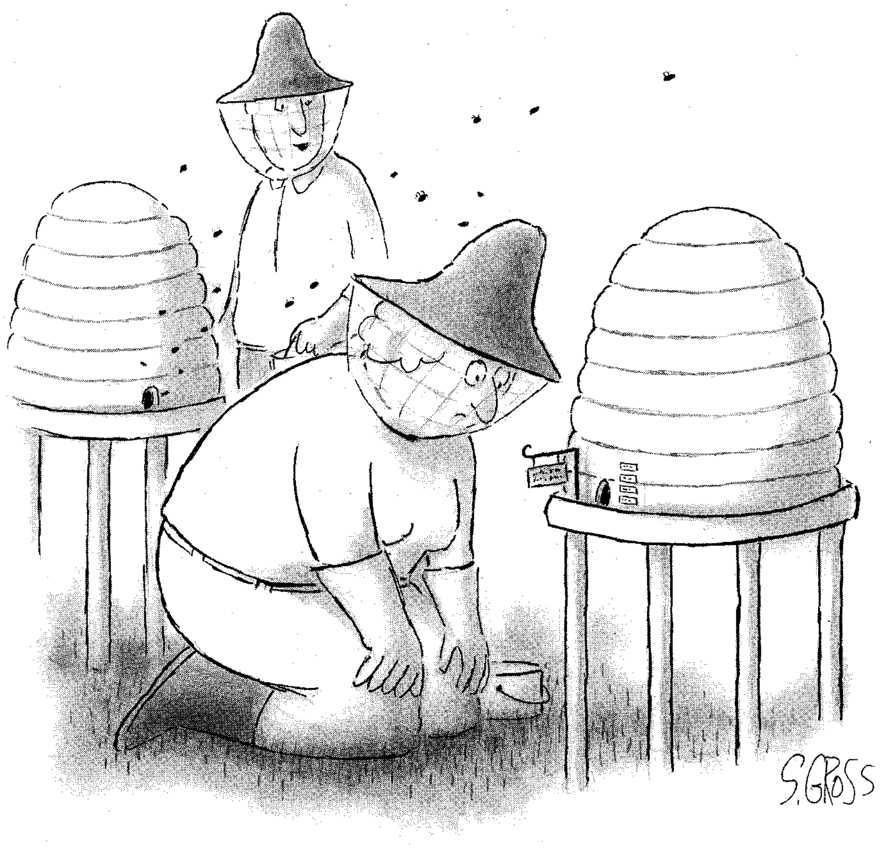
During the day the dogs kept watch over the two rooms, restlessly pacing the length of the living room or sleeping sluggishly, in great canine heaps.

My father came to get me on a matinée day as the actors were on their way out the door. "Thanks, dear pals," he said to them. He told me he had lifted a few too many glasses two evenings earlier and had not been able to meet me at the station. "I was—ahem, ahem—indisposed," he said, with comical exaggeration, and I, without comprehending what he meant, smiled up at him. Now we were going to take a bus to Schroon Lake, New York, in the Adirondack Mountains, where he and my "sainted mother" had rented a cabin. I puzzled over his words about Elsie for a while, then gave it up as another mystery.

He looked tired, as though the glasses he had lifted had weighed too much for him. His water-colored eyes were bloodshot; his voice, usually so deep, so melodic, as though he were always on the point of breaking into song, had a cranky, querulous note; and his words, usually so finely cut, were blurred.

He slept on the bus, falling against me as it lurched. I had not seen him since the time he dropped the supper tray out the window, and I felt wary and nervous. As he slept, I investigated his face, his hands, one of which held an unlit cigarette, his trembling eyelids.

After hours of travelling, we arrived in the hamlet of Schroon Lake. My mother and a friend, a slender, spidery, dark-haired man, were waiting in front of a general store, a dusty, cheese-smelling shadowy space in front of which stood a single gas pump. Nearby was a beat-up little car that apparently belonged to my parents. As I stepped from the bus, the spidery man's eyes widened with amusement. "Oh, she's a one!" he exclaimed to Elsie.



"Those are attorney bees. They represent the killer bees."

"Any of you guys noticing a Dick Cheney effect on your damn vice-presidents?"

• •

We drove several miles and turned off the paved road onto a rutted lane. Soon a small cabin appeared. Behind it was the lake itself. A pale strip of shoreline was still visible, but it vanished when night spread over the water. The cabin was meagrely furnished; the smell of old fires emanated from a stove that stood at one end of the living room.

Recalling the evening in the hotel, I said nothing about meals, although I was hungry. My father fixed me supper with particular effort, noticeable effort, as if he, too, remembered that evening and were determined to erase it from both our memories. He laughed and talked ceaselessly.

The next evening, we drove into town, parking the car across the street from a wooden building that was used for various community purposes including movie showings. We saw a film in which Warner Baxter played the lead. When it was over, I walked beside Elsie into the small anteroom that served as a lobby.

I startled myself by asking her how babies were made. The spidery man on her other side burst into laughter. After a moment, she replied, in an impersonal voice, "Sexual intercourse." At that moment, we reached the car. She drove, with my father in the passenger seat and the man and me in the rear. She spoke animatedly about other matters. No one mentioned the movie or my question and her answer.

Suddenly, as it seemed to me then, my childhood years with Uncle Elwood ended. Plans of which I had been ignorant came to fruition. My father, who was living in California, sent for me. I found myself, at not quite six, on a train with Aunt Jessie, my father's only sister, bound for Los Angeles.

Sober or drunk, my father spoke dismissively about the places he had lived in over the years. After downing a few drinks, he would fall in love with his own voice, theatrically honeyed, filled with significant whispers and pauses; his thoughts stumbled behind.

From fragments of sentences that fell from his lips, I often understood him to claim that he'd been on his way to his true and noble destination when he was sidetracked by women. He himself, he asserted, would have been contented with an unadorned life, a roof over his head to shelter him from the weather, a cot to sleep on, a stove to keep him warm when cold winds blew and upon which he could prepare spartan meals. All men aspire toward the mountain peaks, but women drive them down into valleys of domesticity, where they are ambushed by family life and other degrading and petty tyrannies.

My father met us at the Los Angeles railroad station and drove us to a rented house, saying disdainfully that it was furnished with "yard upon yard of Spanish junk." The road we were on ended half a mile farther among bare hills. At their summit rose a gigantic sign: "Hollywoodland." Big shadowed houses stood back from the street, separated by extensive gardens and trees unfamiliar to me. My parents' house was large, its windows partially hidden by elaborate ironwork grilles. An outside staircase reached the top floor.

Aunt Jessie, her task completed, stayed a week or so and then returned to the East and her mother, whom she'd left in a housekeeper's care. On the evening of the day she boarded a train bound for New York, Daddy and my mother went out to a party, leaving me on my own.

In the long dusk, I wandered through doorless, cavelike rooms with beamed ceilings and rough white plaster walls, turning on lights where I could reach the switch. A chill rose from the red tiles of the floor. Tables and chairs were made of dark wood. A plump pink sofa squatted in the center of one of the larger rooms. The sudden barking of a dog startled me, each bark like a gunshot.

I came to the front door, opened it, and stepped outside. It swung shut behind me. I tried the metal handle. Even as I moved it back and forth, I knew I was locked out.

The dark tightened around me, and for a moment I couldn't draw breath. It was as if the night were a black sack into which I'd been dropped. I listened. A faint breeze rustled the leaves of the trees; I heard a car speed up with a grinding of gears. There was the steady splash of a waterfall at the back of the house. I tiptoed toward it across the grass.

It fell into a shallow pool like a serpent sliding from a tree branch, the water shimmering in the lights from the house. In the pool swam a few torpid goldfish. I had spent hours beside that pool, and one morning I had fallen into it.

A man appeared suddenly a few feet away. His head was cocked at an angle, as though he, too, were listening. When he saw me, he said—and his voice surprised me in a world only seconds ago empty of human life—"I've made the

The author's parents, Elsie and Paul Fox, left her in a foundling home; her Spanish grandmother rescued her, then gave her up.

same mistake before. I think I've left on my lawn sprinkler. Then I find out it's the sound of your little waterfall." He waved toward it.

"I'm locked out," I told him.

He nodded. He seemed to know that no one was home. He said, "We'll go to my house. Are you hungry?" I said yes, though I wasn't. He held out his hand and I took it. We walked a short distance to his house.

In the kitchen, his wife sliced a banana into a bowl. I ate it at the kitchen table, observed by their grave, friendly faces. When I'd finished the banana, I was so sleepy I could hardly hold my head up. The wife led me up a staircase to a spare bedroom, unused since their son had grown up and moved to another state to live and work. I crawled beneath the sheet in my underwear, and she drew a quilt up over me. I was nearly asleep when she whispered that she had made the quilt herself. It was warm, bright with color. My last thought was of Joseph's coat, which I'd heard about in Sunday school in Uncle Elwood's church.

Early the next morning, I walked back to my parents' house and climbed up the outside steps to a door. It was unlocked. I opened it, at the same time calling, "Daddy!"

From one of two beds in the bedroom, a blanket rose into the air like a large animal getting to its four feet. Suddenly my father was holding me like a rag doll and running down the back stairs. His pajama top was unbuttoned. I glimpsed patches of pale skin as we entered the kitchen, where a black maid was ironing. He seemed unaware of her presence as he whirled about looking for a chair. What he'd wanted was to get me out of the bedroom.

I knew it wasn't my mother in the other bed. I'd seen yellow hair on the pillow.

He lighted on a chair, put me across his knees, and began to spank me.

"Mr. Fox! That isn't right! It isn't fair!" the maid protested.

My father looked up at her as if surprised by her presence. I was astonished that she had defended me and lifted my head from his knee to stare at her. Years later, when I thought about her—and I thought about her often—I realized how brave she had been.

A decade after the incident, my father told me, in what he deemed to be a comical voice, that that night he had pretended to be a childless bachelor and had "brought home a girl from the party." Then I had burst into the bedroom at a heathen hour of the morning, shouting, "Daddy!"

I never discovered where my mother had spent the night. Nor did my father ask me where I had been before I opened the door to the bedroom.

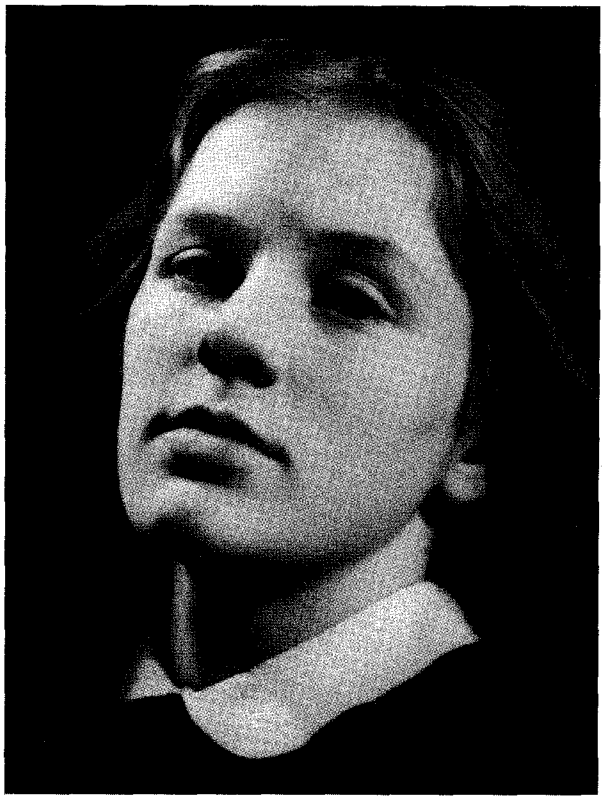
A few days afterward, my father drove me to Redlands, a small town about seventy miles from Hollywood. He left me there in the care of an old woman, Mrs. Cummings. She kept house for Sophie, her enormous daughter, who ran a summer camp for girls in the Big Bear Mountains.

Years later, he told me that after I'd spent a week or so in Hollywood, in the house with the waterfall, my mother's reaction to me had resulted in his taking me to old Mrs. Cummings and leaving me in her care.

"She gave me an ultimatum," he began. "She said, 'Either she goes or I go.'" He shook his head ruefully. "I had no choice," he said, in a faintly self-pitying tone of voice. "I had only a few days to find someone to take care of you." Then he repeated his words: "I had no choice."

I learned that if I was to see my parents, I had to live away from them. Four or five times I visited them during the year I spent in Redlands. Each time,

COURTESY PAULA FOX (3)



Paula at six, in 1929, and at thirteen or fourteen. "I learned that if I was to see my parents, I had to live away from them."

Mrs. Cummings would put me on a train to Los Angeles, placing me in the charge of a porter.

One time, no one met me at the train. It was early evening. I sat for a while on a station bench, a small suitcase next to me. I worked out the words on a sign over a booth a few yards away. "Traveler's Aid," it read.

I was a traveller and I needed aid. I went over. I don't recall any conversation, but I do remember the outcome. The woman behind the booth gave me taxi fare, and she smiled as she put the bills in both my hands.

My parents moved to Malibu Beach, where they rented a house built to look like the midsection of a small ship. A deck jutted out over the sand. At the top there was a large square room—like a captain's bridge, my father said—from which I could see the vast ocean.

I spent several weekends at the Malibu house. At a fated hour all the mornings I was there, my father gripped my resistant hands and lifted me over the foaming waves of the surf toward the dreadful green waters of the Pacific, into which he dropped me.

I sank at once, then rose, running in the water, keeping afloat in a way that every second left me in doubt about whether I would live to the next. I heard myself gasping and sputtering; it frightened me further. I knew there were miles of water-filled space below me. The only thing keeping me above it was the frenzied movement of my feet. "I'm drowning!" I'd cry. "No, you aren't!" my father called out in a hard, jocular voice from a few yards away. And I wasn't.

Malibu was a beach-movie palace. Actors and actresses, oiled with various preparations to keep themselves from getting sunburned, lay gleaming on the sand, or walked along the edge of the surf, as I once saw Richard Barthelmess do. One morning, the next-door neighbors appeared: Lilyan Tashman in a startling white bathing suit, her face a polar snowfield of cold cream, and her husband, Edmund Lowe, with his black thread of mustache.

One Sunday morning, John Gilbert took me for a long walk, holding my hand and talking to me in his high, thin voice. Most weekends that I was there, one of my father's actor friends, Charles Bickford, would drop by to sit on the beach and talk to Daddy in his deep voice.

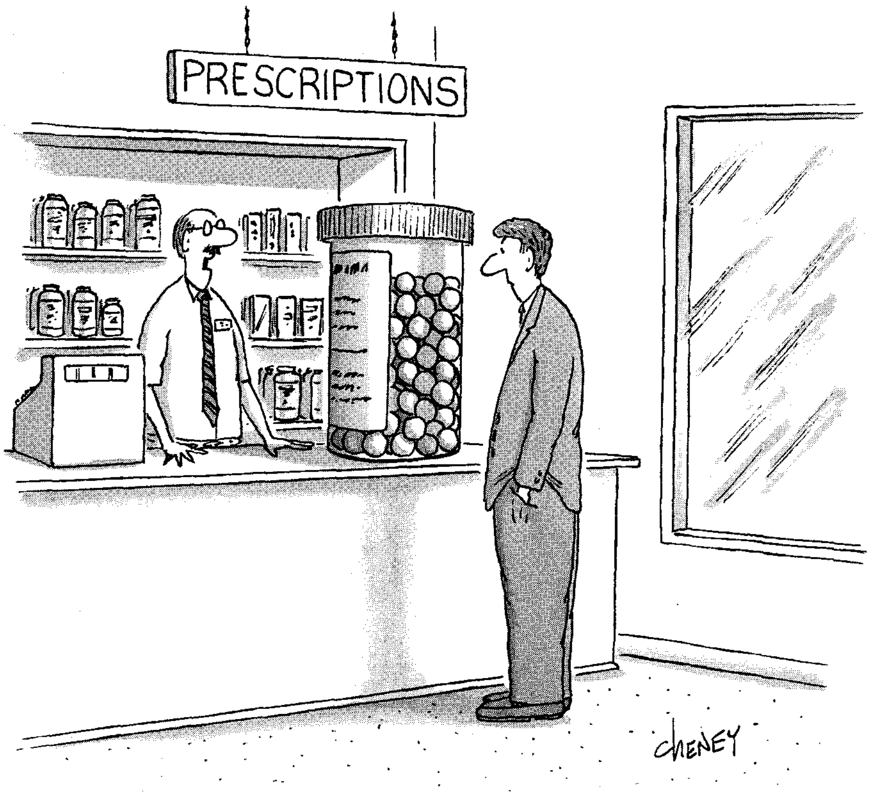
After he had gone, Daddy said, "Actors are so dumb. You wouldn't believe how dumb they are!"

Mary Barthelmess, a few years older than I, gave me a pair of rose-colored beach pajamas she had outgrown. When I tried them on, I was stung on my rear end by a bee trapped inside the cotton folds. I had learned it was dangerous to complain in my mother's hearing. My hand flew to cover my mouth and hold in my startled cry.

Several weeks earlier, I had murmured to Daddy that I had a toothache. My mother just then entered the room. In a neutral voice she said, "I'll fix that for you." She turned, smiling, to my father. "Would you put her in the rumble seat?" It may have seemed to him that she had nothing in mind but a short drive in the open air.

She drove on the steep, curving hills that rose above Malibu. Through the back window I saw how rigidly she held her back, how stiff her neck was, as she drove like the wind and I was shaken like a rattle.

The drive lasted twenty minutes or so—the drive lasted forever. When we returned to the beach house, she emerged from the car and stood like a statue for a moment, staring at me in the



"It's a new anti-depressant—instead of swallowing it, you throw it at anyone who appears to be having a good time."

• •

rumble seat with her great dark eyes, her face stony. "Do you still have a toothache?" she inquired politely.

One afternoon I found my father slouched in a canvas chair on the "captain's bridge," a bottle of gin on the floor next to his right foot. "Colonel Fear," he called out, in a stupefied voice. I glanced back at the door, thinking someone might be there. No one. "Have you ever met him? Ah, if you'd met him, you'd not forget him," he muttered. Briefly, his bloodshot blue eyes came into focus. He saw it was me. "And whose little girl are you?" he inquired, in a comical falsetto voice. When I laughed, he said, "I knew when I took you to the Adirondacks that time that I'd won you. I licked up a bit of salt I'd spilled on my hand, and you said, 'You're funny,' and that's how I knew."

One night my father drove me, along with an actor, Minor Watson, to the Venice amusement park. The roller coaster's dark coil lifted up from the surface of the black water and flung its length farther into the darkness. Only a few small bulbs hung from a wire, casting a dim light on the narrow tracks. Daddy persuaded me to try the ride. I was reluctant. Still, I stepped after him into one of the open cars where Minor Watson was already sitting, a vague, kindly smile on his face.

We plunged and ascended. I howled to be let off, howled in fright, clutched my father's jacket until, as the track levelled out, the car slowed down before coming to a halt.

Dazed, I stumbled along the pier until I heard my father's voice calling me. I turned around to see Daddy and Minor standing together in front of a glaringly lit shooting gallery, their faces in shadow. I felt I didn't know anyone in the world, and no one knew me.

Daddy picked up a rifle chained to the counter, shot, hit a target, and won a stuffed animal. On our return to Malibu, he drew the car up in front of a sprawling estate in Santa Monica.

"Pal, take this creature to the door and give it to anyone who answers the bell," he said as he handed me the toy. "Whoever the hell it is, tell him the bear is for your cousin, Douglas Fairbanks."

The task restored some balance I'd lost on the roller-coaster ride, and I did it willingly. I walked up a long path to the front door and rang an ornate bell. After a while, it was answered by an old man in some sort of costume. He peered down at me and asked, "Yes, miss?"

I handed up the bear and repeated my father's message. The old man accepted both words and toy and said he'd pass them on to Mr. Fairbanks when he returned from location.

The last day I spent at Malibu Beach, Uncle Elwood appeared on the sand wearing a black bathing suit.

I don't know how he had arrived there. I knew he had come to see me. I took his hand and led him across sand warmed by the morning sun and into the foaming surf, urging him on, elatedly, until we were both dog-paddling in the Pacific. He came the next day and then, as far as I knew, returned to Balmville.

Within a month or two of his visit, I, too, returned to the minister's house on the hill, with whom or how I don't recall.

I thought I might burst with happiness, freed from a yearlong curse, as though I were a girl in a fairy tale.

Uncle Elwood told me he had stood on the roof of the old stable to watch the California-bound train make its way north on the east bank of the Hudson River—the train I had been on with Aunt Jessie.

I spent only a few days with Uncle Elwood. One afternoon I saw a taxi pause at the bottom of the driveway. An elderly woman emerged from the passenger seat.

It had been raining on and off for days. The driveway was impassable for most cars except Uncle Elwood's doughty old Packard. I watched the woman make her slow way through the rain and mud.

At last she stood in the hall, laughing with what I took to be embarrassment at her dishevelled state, at the mud on her shoes.

"Paulita," she said. My heart sank. She was my Spanish grandmother, come to take me away. Her duties with her relative in Cuba were lighter; she would not be travelling there every year. At some point during the grim hours that followed each other like links in a chain drawing me away from Uncle Elwood, she looked at me for a long moment and then said to him, "She is of my blood."

One morning, my grandmother told me that in a few days she and I were going to Cuba to spend a year or so on a sugar plantation owned by a cousin of ours whom I was to address as "Tía Luisa." I didn't know where Cuba was, but I found it in a school atlas, a green lizard lying athwart a blue sea.

My grandmother and I left Kew Gardens, where we had been living, early one morning toward the end of 1931, when I was eight. We took the Long Island Rail Road to Pennsylvania Station in New York City, and as we carried our suitcases along the side of another train, nearly hidden by a rolling cocoon of steam, she told me that Tía Luisa owned the last car.

How could one person own a railroad car?

An elderly man hurried toward us. "Good morning, Señora de Sola," he said, bowing slightly. "Let me take your luggage." He looked down at me and smiled. He had pale-blue eyes and white hair.

My grandmother said his name was Prince and he was an English butler, and was the head of Tía Luisa's staff of servants. Among them, she told me, were Tía Luisa's own seamstress, known as La Gallega because she had been born in Galicia, and her personal physician, Dr. Babito.

I thought to myself that Prince's smile was a sign that he forgave us for being poor.

We stepped onto the platform. The entrance to the private car was partly screened by pots of palm trees reaching to the ceiling. Beyond them, in a regal armchair, dozed a small elderly woman. Her eyebrows were like black caterpillars that had come to a halt on her forehead, and her small bejewelled hands lay crumpled in her lap.

Servants were moving about silently. The carpet muffled the sounds of their footsteps as they arranged things in drawers.

They slept in berths in another car, as I did. My grandmother spent the nights with Tía Luisa in a bedroom at the end of the private car. I heard later from La Gallega that on very hot afternoons in central Hormiguero, on the plantation she owned, Tía Luisa would rise from her siesta, creep to an open window, and shout for the officer, long dead, whom she had loved in her youth but not married: "*Mi coronel! Mi coronel! Adelante!*"

Despite these fits of madness, she was sane enough to run the plantation profitably with the help of her surviving son, Eli. Her younger son, a pilot in the world war, had been shot down. When I heard about him and his fate, I envisioned him descending to earth gripping a spiralling rope of fire.

A smell pervaded the private car which might have come from the palms or the earth they were rooted in, or something else in the atmosphere, I thought later: a ripe, green, warm smell from Cuba itself.

During the first month I spent in Hormiguero, I hurried out of bed as soon as I awoke in the mornings. I was mad to begin the day, its glowing yellow light shining through the slats of the wood shutters on the windows of a room near the servants' quarters which I shared with my grandmother. She might come to bed long after dark, after Tía Luisa dismissed her. Often she wasn't dismissed, and I slept alone.

In the vast kitchen, where I ate fruit standing at a counter, servants buzzed and swarmed, halting for a few seconds in the preparation of breakfast trays to drink from their own cups of café con leche. They were harried by the nearly constant jangling of the bells in an open box affixed to the wall, with numbers corresponding to the bedrooms of the waking household. I knew better than to try at such times to get the attention of Emilio, a cook and my friend in the kitchen, comical, plump, and good-natured. He and La Gallega, the seamstress, kept an eye on my comings and goings. But not on all of them, especially in the mornings, when they were so busy.

I usually went to the orchard, where oranges and grapefruit and bananas ripened on short thick-trunked trees. Scattered among them, bearing fruit I didn't recognize, were thin tall trees that loomed over the orchard. Beyond them was a sea of sugarcane. The smell I had noticed on the train was powerfully present everywhere I went in Hormiguero.

I spent hours in the vast formal garden. Gravel-covered paths wound among beds and hills of flowers. Now and then, I saw Tía Luisa being pushed among them in a wheelchair by Prince. She had a sulky, pettish expression on her face. Sometimes she was asleep.

At the north side of the garden, dividing it from wild, unkept land where pigs rooted and rolled, were two large cages, one filled with brilliant-feathered birds, the other with thin black-and-white monkeys that swung to and fro through the air from the branches of a dead tree. Sitting below them, among rinds and cores of fruit, was a cranky-looking fat gray monkey. His eyes blinked rapidly when I came near. I gave the animals my lunch—rice and beans, fried and salted disks of banana, a slab of meat—especially when the day was intensely hot and such a big meal upset my stomach.

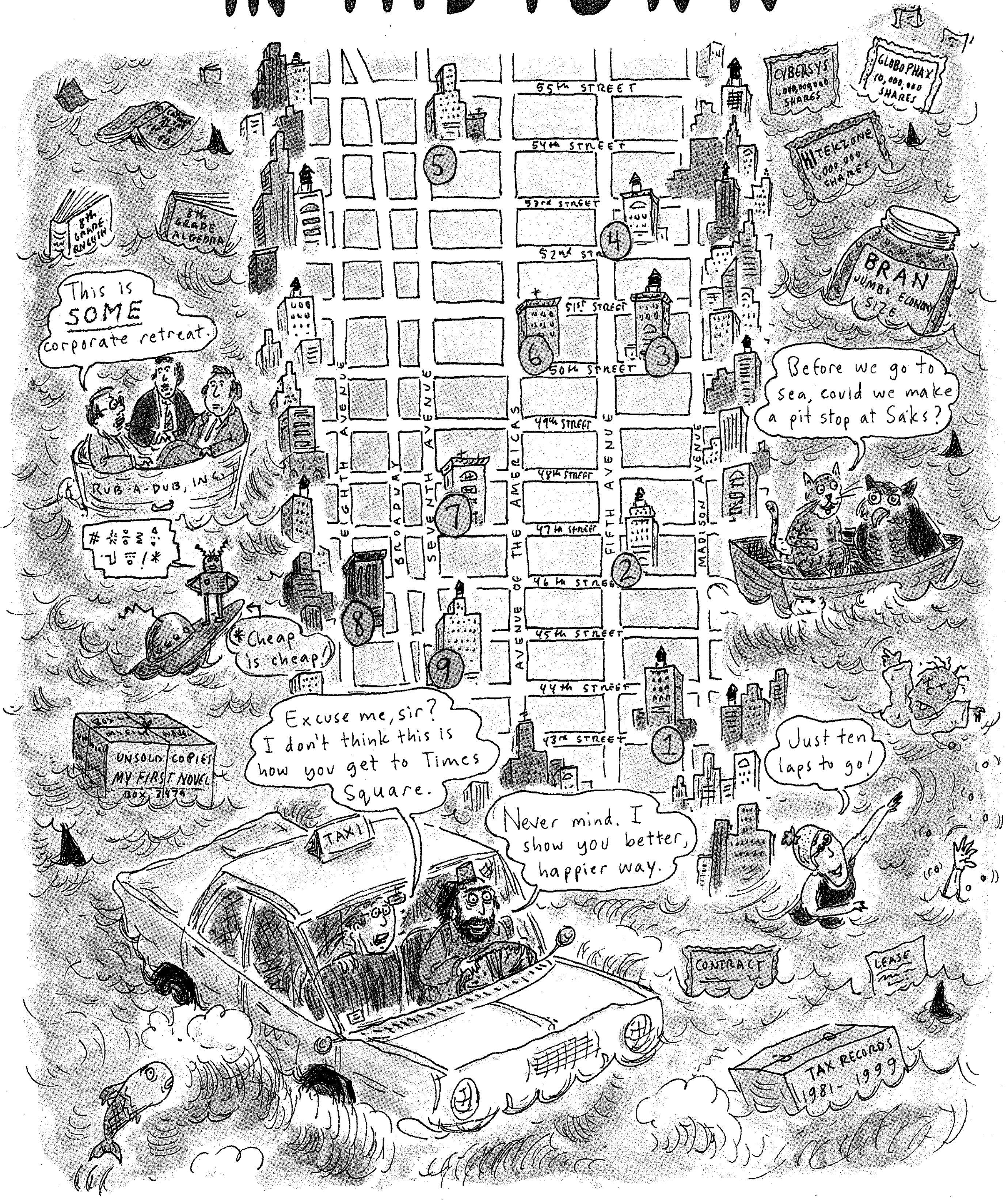
At first I had felt exhilarated by freedom. But soon I began to be lonely. For hours at a time, there was no one who said my name.

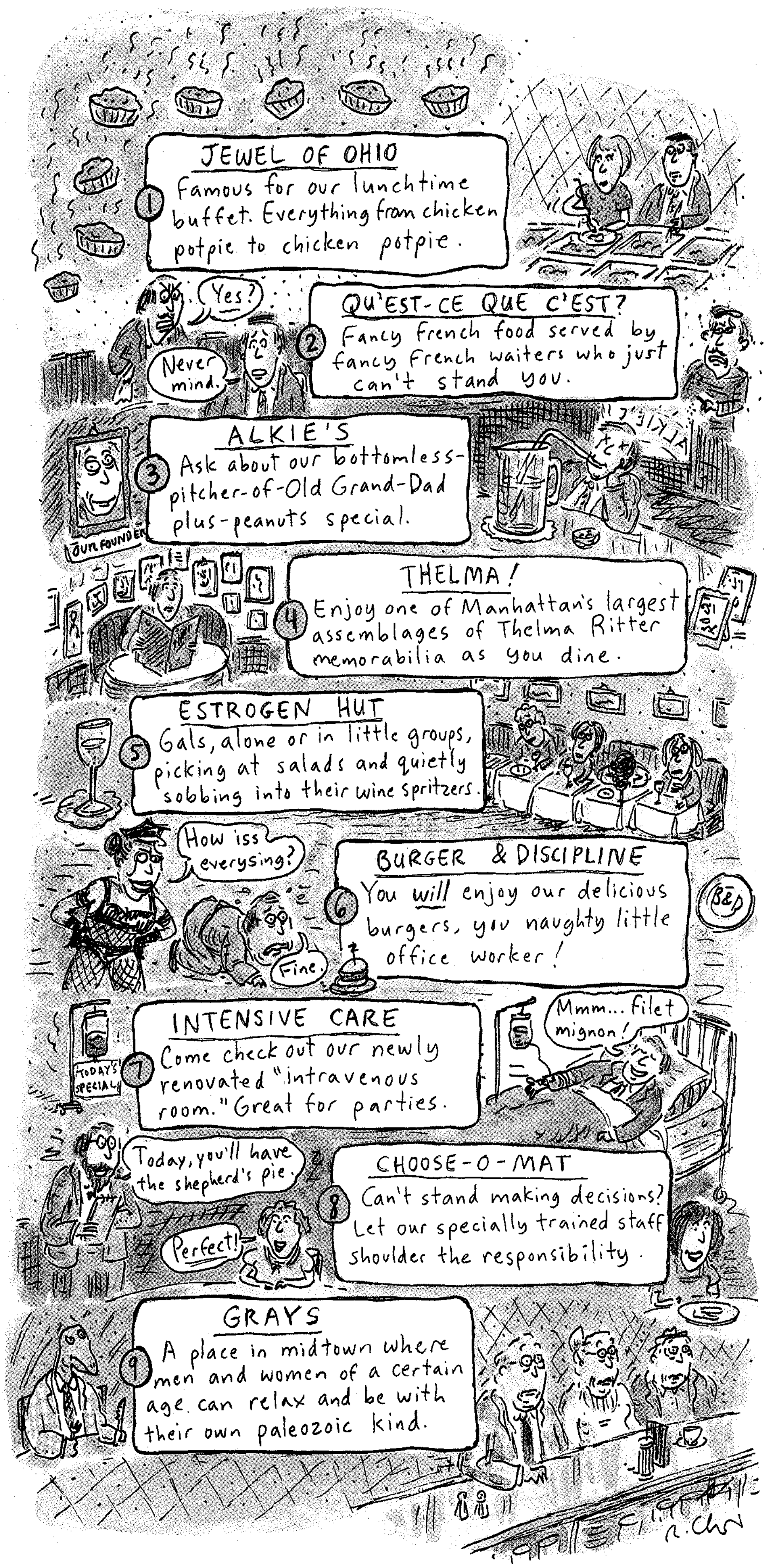
Three wooden steps descended to the ground from the back door of the kitchen. I took them at a jump. One morning I found a stone-faced man in a suit waiting near the steps. "*Vamos a la escuela,*" he said, in a spiritless voice, walking a few steps and looking back to see that I was following him. I was, kicking up fans of dust, wondering if I'd find a friend in the school where he was leading me.

We left the garden and Tía Luisa's grand house, passing the *ingenio de azúcar*, the sugar refinery, from which issued a great throbbing, like a monstrous heart. The man abruptly stopped. He said, "*Aquí.*" We had arrived at the chapel, where I had been many times before, dreaming through Mass. As soon as we entered, he knelt. I heard his knee creak as he rose after crossing himself furtively. He accompanied me as far as the altar. Nearby was a black curtain he drew aside to reveal a closed door. I heard the voices of children.

For a moment, I was afraid. I turned

NEW RESTAURANTS IN MIDTOWN


55th STREET
54th STREET
53rd STREET
52nd STREET
51st STREET
50th STREET
49th STREET
48th STREET
47th STREET
46th STREET
45th STREET
44th STREET
43rd STREET
EIGHTH AVENUE
BROADWAY
SEVENTH AVENUE
AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
FIFTH AVENUE
MADISON AVENUE
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
CYBERSYS 1,000,000,000 SHARES
GLOBOPHAX 10,000,000 SHARES
HITEKZONE 1,000,000 SHARES
BRAN JUMBO ECONOMY SIZE
8th GRADE ENGLISH
8th GRADE ALGEBRA
This is SOME corporate retreat.
RUB-A-DUB, INC.
Before we go to sea, could we make a pit stop at Saks?
*Cheap is cheap!
Just ten laps to go!
UNSOLD COPIES MY FIRST NOVEL BOX 3/474
Excuse me, sir? I don't think this is how you get to Times Square.
TAXI
Never mind. I show you better, happier way.
CONTRACT
LEASE
TAX RECORDS 1981-1999


JEWEL OF OHIO
1 Famous for our lunchtime buffet. Everything from chicken potpie to chicken potpie.
Yes?
Never mind.
QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST?
2 Fancy French food served by fancy French waiters who just can't stand you.
ALKIE'S
3 Ask about our bottomless-pitcher-of-Old Grand-Dad plus-peanuts special.
OUR FOUNDER
THELMA!
4 Enjoy one of Manhattan's largest assemblages of Thelma Ritter memorabilia as you dine.
ESTROGEN HUT
5 Gals, alone or in little groups, picking at salads and quietly sobbing into their wine spritzers.
How iss everysing?
Fine.
BURGER & DISCIPLINE
6 You will enjoy our delicious burgers, you naughty little office worker!
B&D
INTENSIVE CARE
7 Come check out our newly renovated "intravenous room." Great for parties.
TODAY'S SPECIAL
Mmm... filet mignon!
Today, you'll have the shepherd's pie.
Perfect!
CHOOSE-O-MAT
8 Can't stand making decisions? Let our specially trained staff shoulder the responsibility.
GRAYS
9 A place in midtown where men and women of a certain age can relax and be with their own paleozoic kind.

to my guide, but he was walking, nearly running, up the aisle.

I opened the door to a large square room with a blackboard at one end nearly covered by a ragged cloth map of the world, hanging unevenly, the kind of map that can be lowered or raised by two cords.

They must have heard earlier that I was coming to the school. Everyone was smiling, calling my name, nine students and their teacher, Señora García.

The children in Señora García's classroom were of different ages, the oldest around twelve, the youngest close to my age. I don't know how she was able to teach children of such varied ages in one classroom, but she managed to do so. At times, still older children turned up in class, only to be absent the next day or the next week. I heard that they worked in the cane fields.

I began to be glad that there was no one person looking after me. I soon discovered a way to Señora García's house. It was a real house, larger than the neighboring houses, or *bohíos*, as they were called by the families who lived in them. Unlike the Señora's house, the *bohíos* were raised several feet above the ground on stilts. Underneath them chickens scratched and clucked incessantly.

The Señora's kitchen was clean; a doorway covered with a beaded curtain led to a second room, where I glimpsed a bed. No one who worked on the plantation had an inside lavatory as far as I knew, not even the Garcías, and few had two rooms, as they did.

The kitchen was a place to meet other children, and we were made welcome by La Señora, unless her husband was home. Her kitchen was equipped with a sink and a water tap. She heated water in a kettle on the stove many times over to fill a movable tin tub, where each of us had a bath. After La Señora had put up my hair in paper twists so it would be curly for a few hours, we were ready for our *paseo*, a walk through the plantation.

In the latter part of the day, a breeze would spring up and rustle among palm fronds and grassy fields, blowing the temporary curls off my forehead. I was always stirred by the cooling of the day.

When the weather changed and the heat intensified, torrents of rain fell for two or three hours every afternoon. The meetings with other children in the García kitchen continued. We listened to records played on a phonograph, songs and dances that were popular in Havana. One of us would crank up the phonograph when the record ended.

During a rare hailstorm, I and my friends ran shrieking with excitement onto the cracked cement of a tennis court, unused for years ever since Tía Luisa's son Eli had grown too old to play the game.

I went home before dark. My supper awaited me on a tray in the kitchen. La Gallega stopped to pat my shoulder, and Emilio winked at me as they went about their tasks, Emilio carrying trays of covered platters on his way to the dining room, the seamstress on her feet, hastily mending a tear in a linen napkin. Later, I would go to my bedroom, tiptoeing along the hallway like a shadow.

I had begun to belong to the plantation but not to the people in the grand house—who had not, in any case, asked for me. It was in the evenings that I most missed the minister, and books.

One Sunday when I went with my grandmother to the chapel, a visiting priest was holding a special Mass to pray for the return of Tía Luisa's health and sanity. It was extremely hot; the heat had a sound, the rustle of the palmetto fans with which people tried to cool their faces. We rose to recite the Stations of the Cross. I didn't know the words so I muttered gibberish. Suddenly, I felt queasy and light-headed.

The members of the congregation, stupefied by heat and their own droning, didn't notice that I had fainted in the aisle. When I came to, they were still praying, and I crawled to the chapel entrance. A man was passing on the road, pushing a wheelbarrow. He looked at me and said, "Get into my ambulance," and I crawled into it. He took me to the wooden building where the plantation doctor had his office.

The doctor laughed as he lifted me out of the wheelbarrow. He was short and fat and elderly, a specialist, I had been told, in machete cuts and internal parasites. His small office smelled agreeably of cigar smoke. I rested on a couch while he scribbled at his desk. I must have fallen asleep. No one was in the office when I woke. I ran all the way home, got there in time for my lunch, and fed it to the monkeys.

THE HEART

In the construction
of the chest, there is
a heart.

A boat
upon its blood
floats past

and round or down
the stream of life,
the plummeting veins

permit its passage
to admit no gains,
no looking back.

One steps aboard,
one's off.
The ticket taker

signs the time allotted.
Seated, amorphous persons
see no scenery

but feel
a chill about their knees
and hear a fading cry

as all the many sides of life
whiz by,
a blast at best, a loss

of individual impressions.
Still I sit
with you inside me too—

and *us*,
the couple thus encoupled,
ride on into the sweetening dark.

—*Robert Creeley*

My grandmother and I travelled to Cienfuegos, a port town on the Caribbean, just south of the plantation. We had an appointment with a doctor. In the kitchen, I had been complaining about pains in my stomach after Emilio found me feeding the monkeys. The news had reached my grandmother. It was the first time we'd been together in weeks, except at night when we were both sleeping. I asked her what she did for Tía Luisa.

She said she was her companion. I had seen that word in stories. One went on one's travels with a companion. Later, I discovered she was paid for it, two hundred dollars a month, which continued for years, even after Tía Luisa was dead. I knew she was a kind of servant to the old woman. Everyone on the plantation was a servant, except Tía Luisa and her son.

The new doctor's office was filled with instruments, of which I could see he was proud. He began nearly every sentence with "What we have here is a great advance in medical science"—a fluoroscope, or a special X-ray machine, or an implement to be used in surgery. I stood in front of the fluoroscope, a glass oyster-colored screen where he could peer at my innards. "Nervous indigestion," he pronounced.

On the train returning to the plantation, my grandmother sighed and said my mother's perpetual stomach troubles had begun with nervous indigestion. Ever since I had lived with my grandmother, I had heard about Elsie's gut. I was haunted by my grandmother's stories—and by her infrequent advice, such as "If you don't dry between your toes, you'll bring on an attack of appendicitis." One of her stories, from the time she and my grandfather lived on their own plantation, Cienegita, was about a tapeworm excreted into a toilet by one of her maids. The tapeworm was wound around and around, filling up the space. Every time she spoke of it, the worm lengthened.

A dwarf lived and worked in Hormiguero. When I first saw him, I thought he was a misshapen child. Upon closer inspection, I realized he was an elderly man. He was sweet-natured and amiable, and let us all touch the hump on his back as we said "*Enano*"—dwarf—for good luck.

One evening, a movie was shown in the Hormiguero community hall. I was sent to see it by my grandmother, accompanied by the same man who had taken me to school. He was as silent as he had been that day. When we came to

online punchlines at cartoonbank.com

The internet's argest searchable cartoon database and your best online source for New Yorker cartoons.

Cartoons available for:

"cartoon-of-the-day" features

electronic greeting cards

email & web marketing

advertising in all media

magazine & book publishing

ıtion's administration office. re no children in the kitchen; was resting on its side in a s bewildered and apprehen- García glanced at me for a e me a hurried smile, and r husband, and they went on onversation in low voices.

house and made my way ne-filled freight cars, the nill, to the stone portico of e. I rarely entered the house loors. A dozen rocking chairs p along the portico, empty, vait. I went down a corridor en and found the servants big table, their heads bent, ch other in alarmed voices. t Emilio, who looked at me ıg me. Then he started. "*Ay!*

event was forming itself as form in a menacing sky. randmother came to bed asked her what was hap- answered by saying that we ıing to Havana in a day or so. o, my grandmother, and I ía Luisa at the Hotel Na- ıvana. The servants were maller hotels in the city and ly in the morning to get to re my ancient cousin awoke. lmother was always with andered along the corridors he huge lobby. I was under the illusion that the hotel staff were now my caretakers, and that the permission of the bell captain was required before I could use the swimming pool in the gardens.

"May I use the pool today?" I would ask.

He would close his eyes, appear to ponder, then arrive at a decision. "Yes, but only this morning," he would answer, in a tone of reluctant judiciousness.

There were American tourists staying at the hotel, and one descended in the elevator with me. He leaned against the elevator panelling, cushioning himself with both hands. "You have such honest gray eyes," he commented.

"My eyes are blue," I replied, not with cheekiness, only to set the record straight.

He bent forward to look at me more closely. "So they are," he said.

When the elevator reached the lobby and the two of us walked out of it, several hotel employees sprang forward.

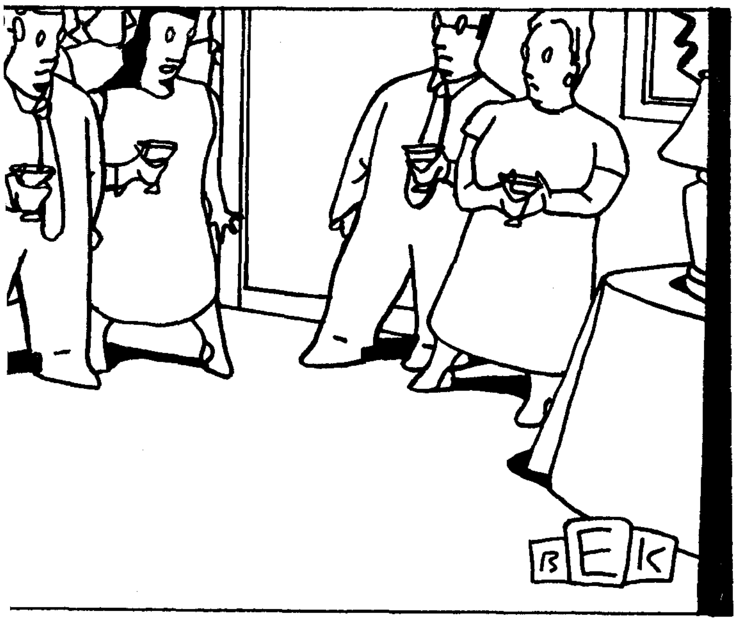
"Meester Keaton!" they exclaimed in unison. The bell captain whispered to me, "El Señor Buster Keaton," but the name meant nothing to me.

"Can I swim today?" I asked him.

He nodded, his attention on Keaton. I changed into my bathing suit in a small house beside the pool, a blue oblong of glittering water. I dog-paddled about.

One morning, the bell captain said "No!" to my usual question.

I was startled and disappointed. He



how bad things are, we manage to keep our sense of spending."

must have noticed, because he added, more softly, "The revolution began today."

That afternoon, young men came to the Hotel Nacional and hurled stones at some of the windows. I heard sporadic shooting. A day or so later, we embarked on a ship bound for Florida.

When we arrived in New York City, Tía Luisa, in the care of Dr. Babito and Prince, was driven to the Plaza Hotel, where she kept a suite, using it two weeks of the year. That same week, my grandmother said that the President of Cuba, Gerardo Machado, had been overthrown. It was 1933. I was ten.

When I was eleven, my parents returned from a lengthy sojourn in Europe. They slid into my sight standing on the deck of a small passenger ship out of Marseilles, which docked on the Hudson River alongside a cavernous shed. They were returning home after many adventures, the most recent being a flight, a few weeks earlier, from the Balearic island of Ibiza during the early days of the Spanish Civil War.

My mother had draped a polo coat over her shoulders—I suppose because it was a cool spring day—and she smiled down at my grandmother and me as we waited in the shadowed darkness of the shed. Sunlight fell in daggers through holes in the roof high above us.

It was years since I'd seen them. They were as handsome as movie stars. Smoke trailed like a festive streamer from the cigarette my mother held between two fingers of her right hand. When she realized we'd spotted her, she waved once and her head was momentarily wreathed in smoke. The gangplank was lowered thunderously across the abyss between the deck and the pier. Passengers began to trickle across it. Suddenly my parents were standing before us, a steamer trunk like a third presence between them. I knew that trunk; I'd seen it in Provincetown years earlier.

"Hello . . . hello . . . hello," they called to us, as if we were far away. They pointed out their luggage for porters, speaking to my grandmother and me in voices that were deep, melodious—not everyday voices like those I heard in Kew Gardens, where we were living again, but of an unbroken suavity, as though they'd memorized whole pages written for them on this occasion of their homecoming.

They spoke of shipboard life, and told about a cave in Ibiza outside of which my father had crouched for hours, embarrassed by a fit of claustrophobia that had paralyzed him not two feet from the entrance, while my mother hid inside along with other refugees. The next day, they escaped to a ship that carried them to Marseilles. They ruefully acknowledged, with charming smiles, that no troops from either side especially wanted to capture them, and told about the demeanor and the somewhat hostile behavior of the French in the port; with seriocomic emphasis, they warned us about the pitfalls of British filmmaking—as though either of us might be about to launch into it ourselves—and such myriad subjects that although I stood there motionless and listening ravenously, I felt I was tumbling down a mountainside, an avalanche a few yards behind me.

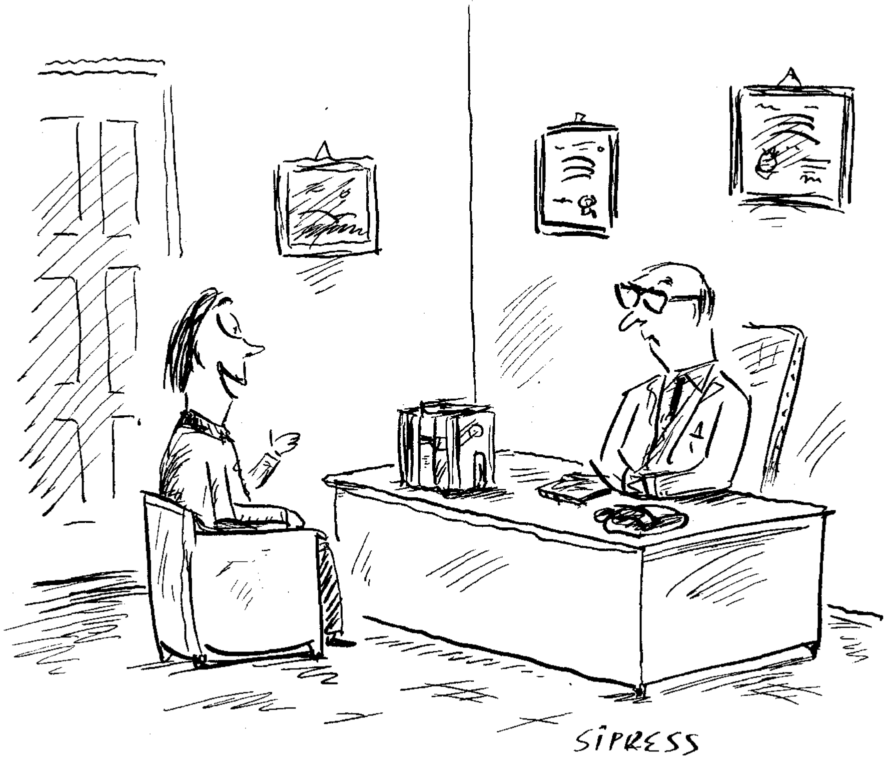
My mother had not a trace of a foreign accent, although, as I learned over the next few months, she spoke English with a foreigner's extreme caution, as if entering an unexplored forest full of dangers. She wanted, I guessed, to speak impeccably, and she would often pause in the middle of a sentence to make a kind of grammar drama. "Is it 'sort' or 'kind'?" "Is it 'were' or 'was'?" "Is it 'me' or 'I'?" she would ask, pondering the perilous choices and looking up at the ceiling, as though it might contain the answer.

Now, in midsentence, she switched to Spanish and bent suddenly to embrace my grandmother with nearly human warmth, as if she'd all at once recalled that the elderly woman standing so submissively behind her, a stunned smile on her face, was her own mother, who, with her poor grasp of English, would not have understood even a part of what had been said.

My mother's eyes stared at me over my grandmother's shoulder. Her mouth formed a cold radiant smile. My soul shivered.

My father leaned toward me at that moment, reaching out a hand to push a clump of hair behind my ear. The tips of his fingers were damp. He laughed. He murmured, "Well, pal. Well, well . . . Here we all are."

I had been told by some relative that my father wrote for the movies. During the month that followed my parents' re-



"What I was wondering is, Doctor, can you make me straight during the week and gay on the weekends?"

turn from Europe, he sold a script to a Hollywood studio for ten thousand dollars, a sum beyond my comprehension. It was titled "The Last Train from Madrid." When I visited my mother, decades later, a few months before she died, she reported to me with a roguish smile that Graham Greene had said it was the worst movie he ever saw.

They went directly from the ship to a small Manhattan hotel, and after two days took a room at the Half Moon Hotel, on the boardwalk at Coney Island—a ramshackle pile at the best of times, which has since been torn down.

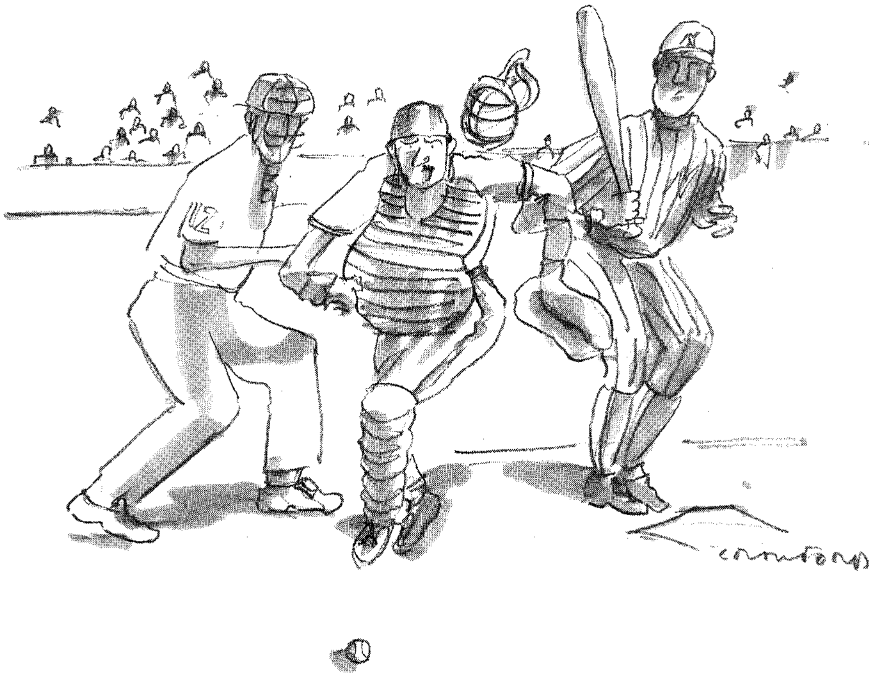
My father said they were too "broke" to afford the first hotel. Something about his tone of voice suggested to me that being broke was a temporary condition and that it was different from being poor.

He told me he'd written the entire movie in a week while my mother handed him Benzedrine tablets from the bed upon which she lay, doing crossword puzzles and lighting cigarette after cigarette.

My grandmother and I visited them at the Half Moon one afternoon. During the hour or so we spent there, my father presented me with a typewriter, a Hermes baby featherweight, saying, "Don't hock it, I may want it back." Only a few days later, he did take it back, with a muttered explanation I couldn't quite make out.

During that same visit, he said he had heard about a bequest of fifty dollars made to me by our relative in Hormiguero. He asked to borrow it, swearing he would repay me, and speaking as though we both, he and I, understood that money was nothing, and the old lady's leaving it to me, and the amount itself, were trivial matters compared to the larger reality of existence itself.

At this vertiginous moment, my mother spoke from the chair where she was sitting, looking through the pages of a newspaper. "Tía Luisa," she said, without glancing up at me. I had forgotten that there had been a bequest. I looked at my grandmother, who was nodding rapidly and saying, "Yes, yes," in a nearly inaudible voice, as though she had been considering that very matter and arrived at the fortunate conclusion that she and I would make the journey downtown to the bank where the money was and withdraw it at once.



"Lordy, I am such a klutz!"

• •

When my father sold the movie, in a week or so—it was easier in those days, simpler—he didn't offer either to pay back the fifty dollars or to return the typewriter. And I, feeling that both "loans" would be judged by my parents as trivial, never mentioned them. I hadn't cared about the money, but I had liked the typewriter.

Once my father had been paid for the movie, he arranged for me to meet Elsie at De Pinna's department store, on Fifth Avenue, to buy some clothes for me.

There was little danger in the subways and the streets in those days. A child was safe, except for the occasional flasher lurking at the dark end of a station platform who might emerge, like the spirit of an abandoned cave, exposing his genitals, a glazed look on his face. Yet, as I rode into the city from Kew Gardens, I felt an alarm pervading me that I couldn't put a name to.

I saw Elsie before she saw me. She was moving indolently toward the glove counter, close to the store entrance. She looked so isolated yet so complete in herself. It was as though someone using a brushful of black paint had blocked out all the figures walking around her.

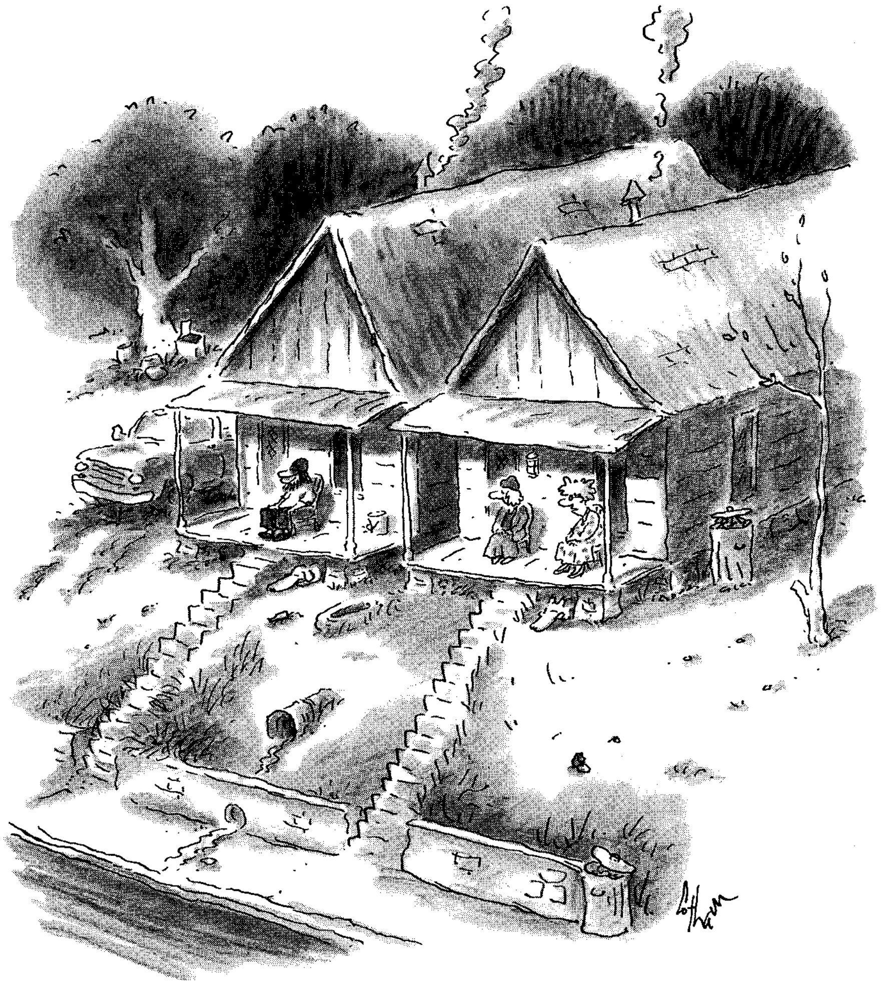
She appeared to sense my presence, or perhaps the presence of a person staring at her intently. She turned toward me as I drew nearer. "Oh. There you are," she said formally. Her smile was meant for great things.

The shoe department was on another floor, and I guessed we were to begin there. We went to the elevator, my mother keeping a certain distance between us. From time to time, she glanced at my footwear.

She bought me two pairs of handsome shoes, one black kidskin, the other green suède. During the time we were together, it felt as if we were being continually introduced to each other. I was conscious of an immense strain, as though a large limp animal hung from my neck, its fur impeding my speech. Each time, with each sentence, I had to start anew. I could hear effort in her voice, too. The whole transaction, selecting, fitting, paying, wrapping, took less than twenty-five minutes. She smiled brilliantly at me in the elevator descending; the smile lasted a few seconds too long.

"Can you get home by yourself?" she asked me, as though I had suddenly strayed into the path of her vision. I nodded wordlessly. The shopping was over.

I watched her walk away up Fifth Avenue with her peculiar stride, so characteristic that in the few weeks she'd been back in the United States I'd learned to imitate it. Half the time she



"The house next door is similar to this one but not quite as grand."

would tiptoe as though she were ready to fly off the earth.

For years afterward, I thought about that stride of hers and, now and then, when I was alone, found myself using it as I crossed the floor of the apartment. It was an expression of her strangeness, her singularity—even of her glamour.

I tried wearing the green suède shoes with a green flowered dress, a hand-me-down from my older cousin Natalie, which, as I'd grown taller, fitted me better. But the combination didn't work. And I had no other clothes to match the elegance of the shoes. They gathered dust in my grandmother's closet. When I left for good, I left the shoes there, too.

In December of that year, my grandmother and I took a train to Cape Cod and then a boat to Martha's Vineyard, where my parents had rented a house in Edgartown.

We were to spend the long Christmas weekend with them. It would be their first holiday season in the United States since they returned from Europe.

My father met our ferry. He stood on a pier, his hands in his jacket pockets, looking out at the stormy waters of the bay. He seemed a heroic figure, and there was a statuelike quality about his stance that gave me the impression he knew it. As he was stowing our luggage in the trunk of the car, I stole a glance at his jacket, the most dashing one I had ever seen. He caught my look. It was a Norfolk jacket, he said, one he'd bought in London when he lived in England and worked for a British movie studio, writing screenplays. He said it was named after the Duke of Norfolk, a hereditary peer.

I was overwhelmed by all that I didn't know, by my bottomless ignorance. Words slipped from his mouth laden with meaning: silent explosions lighting up worlds that had been dark before he spoke.

In an upstairs room of the small weathered-shingle house, he was writing a novel.

My mother said, neutrally, that other children in the neighborhood were able to amuse themselves; they didn't seem to need adults to be involved with their pastimes. With a disinclined air, she taught me how to play solitaire.

My father introduced me to Jimmy Cagney, who was sitting in his idling car on the main street of Edgartown. His clump of a hand, covered with reddish freckles, rested on the window rim.

A minute earlier, Daddy had said loudly, "There's Cagney!"

"Do you know him?" I asked.

"Of course not," he replied, walking ahead of me to cross the street. "Come on. Don't go all maidenly and shy, for crissakes."

Cagney was small and compact. I could see he was thinking of something else as he exchanged greetings with my father. Daddy's voice was nervy, boastful. I kept my eyes on Cagney's hand, which hadn't moved from the window. I thought I saw the skin tighten.

I heard my father say, as we walked away from the car, "He has a house on the island." He seemed apologetic, weakened, and I thought of how the notability of a man turns everyone around him into a beggar.

I saw a dartboard hanging on the dining-room wall. Daddy said dartboards hung in all the pubs in England, and he explained how the game was played. A handful of darts lay nearby. I picked up one and threw it. It landed on the tip of another that was already in the bull's-eye. Daddy, passing at that moment, said, "I'll give you a hundred bucks if you do that again."

He carefully removed the dart I had thrown. I threw another, feeling possessed by dark powers, and saw the thrown dart quivering in the end of the first.

"My God!" he shouted. "You did it!" My mother entered the room frowning. When she heard what he'd promised me, she exclaimed fiercely, "Puppy! You can't do that!"

But he did, holding out rumpled bills

to me that I handed over to my grandmother. It was further evidence of my poor character—in my mother's eyes and in mine. I was assailed by nameless fears. I stared at the dartboard as if it might tell me what I had done. After our return to Kew Gardens, my grandmother bought me a winter coat with part of the winnings. What she did with the rest I don't know.

My mother retired to her bed, where she spent the remainder of the day, a hot-water bottle on her abdomen. I heard my father's voice as he took her cups of hot water to ease the pain of the "gut trouble" she was prone to. My grandmother and I crept around the house, trying not to make noise. Elsie's misery sent out waves of repressive holiness.

Daddy and I took a long walk along an ocean beach a few miles from Edgartown. It was a winter sea, the air damp, the water the color of gunmetal. As the mild surf broke at our feet, Daddy talked. Unlike the last time he had spoken of books, he was sober.

The interior of the country was abhorrent to him. He feared those vast stretches of prairie and mountain, those flat plains, the towns and cities populated by characters out of "Main Street," those Babbitts—

"What are they?" I interrupted.

"Sinclair Lewis wrote novels about them," he replied, with a broad gesture of his arm that took in the whole beach and the bluffs above it.

He had wanted to be a teacher, he said. But he had sold a story to *Smart Set.* A few days later, the telephone rang in the Morningside Heights house he lived in then with his family. He was nineteen and dazed by the call from H. L. Mencken, an editor of the magazine. Mencken invited him to lunch at Delmonico's. He had been so overwhelmed he couldn't even glance at the menu and ordered scrambled eggs.

In the thirties, my father was writing screenplays for a Hollywood studio, along with other scriptwriters. He was drinking a good deal. So was F. Scott Fitzgerald, whom he knew. "A minor poet," he said dismissively.

One of the people he was close to was a playwright from London, Benn Levy, temporarily a screenwriter, too. Benn Levy had put him in a car when he had passed out from liquor, driven him to the Mojave Desert and a shack he had rented in advance, and left him there with a typewriter, a cot, groceries for a week, and a table. Benn had had the foresight to hire an ex-sailor, a grizzled elderly man, to bring him a barrel of fresh water once a week. After my father sobered up, cursing Benn for a couple of days, he began to write his first novel, "Sailor Town."

"Were there snakes?" I asked.

"Yes. One morning I discovered an enormous rattlesnake curled in a corner," he answered. I gasped.

He had to run to his cot, he told me. The snake wriggled out of the shack while Daddy stared at it over the edge of a thin blanket he'd covered himself with.

"Snakes can bite through thin blankets," I said, consulting my imagination.

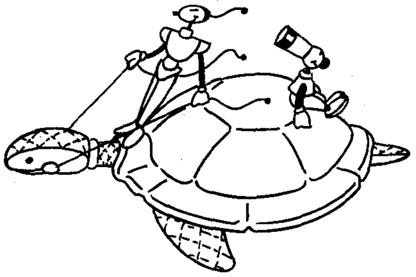
"I know," Daddy replied.

I didn't believe him, but I didn't think he was lying. Or, rather, I believed in the power of stories. Perhaps he didn't tell them all to me that day on the beach. Perhaps the stories were told over several days and evenings of that visit, and in later meetings with my father. They struck me as a way of thinking, of finding out the weakness of given attitudes and so-called truths inherited by the generations. There was no final truth.

There were two English brothers, the Stokers, and they bet on the question of who could write the more frightening story. Bram Stoker won when he wrote "Dracula." Until then, he had written books for children.

There was a South American ant that carried a leaf over its head; there were other ants, called army ants, that could destroy a plantation house.

The French Revolution had begun because cooks in aristocratic households made *côtelettes à la victime:* three lamb chops on a skewer held over a fire. The cooks threw away the top and bottom chops for the benefit of the remaining one.



He'd been a play fixer as well as a playwright. Play fixing was emergency help for ailing plays. One had opened in Boston, with Louis Calhern in the lead role. When Calhern saw that the audience consisted of five people, he stepped forward and invited them to join the cast onstage.

Among our ancestors was Lord Fairfax of Virginia, who had given a young surveyor employment. The young surveyor was George Washington.

My father had been "thrown out" of five colleges because "rules were made to be broken."

I listened desperately, time-haunted, rapt. Now and then I asked a question. Daddy would preface his answer with the assertion "I hear what you're saying beneath that!" It gratified me with its implication that there was a deeper meaning to my words than even I understood. If only I could discover what I really meant! I worked like a mole, tunnelling always deeper for meaning, attributing nuance where there was none.

When it was too windy for the beach, Daddy and I walked through the streets of Edgartown. He knew people everywhere, I thought to myself, as we went into a real-estate agent's office, where a black stove sent out the fragrance of wood smoke. I began to feel nostalgic for a past that wasn't mine.

During that visit, on a late afternoon, I heard him singing "Smiles" to himself. His voice was light and filled with a kind of random tenderness. But his mood changed when he began to amuse himself by replacing "All who love are blind" in the song "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" with "You and who else be-si-i-i-ides?" He prolonged "besides" until his voice gave out.

When my grandmother and I boarded the ferry in Vineyard Haven, my parents stood on the pier. As the boat made its ungainly turn, my mother walked away, but my father stayed until he was a shadow on the horizon.

I was wretched at the idea of returning to Kew Gardens. But I didn't dare contemplate a change in my life. The stars, after all, were fixed in the heavens. ♦

FICTION

HUNGRY SELF

BY REBECCA CURTIS

The stars were beginning above the lake, and the boats with their tiny pilot lights were entering the bay through the channel to dock for the night. Johnny, Ngoc's son, was lighting the red evening candles with half an eye on me, because he liked to keep an eye on the help, or maybe because his mother had taught him to. I had a layer of oil on my face. My apron was shiny with duck sauce, and my pockets were puffy with crumpled dollar bills. We'd had Buffet Day earlier. On Buffet Day we got a lot of families and fat people who came because the other people who came were fat and no one was too embarrassed to load up a really tall plate, and people stayed a few hours to double-eat and left bunches of ones for tips.

I was watching Johnny glide across the dark-red carpet, menus in hand, to seat someone at the last booth in the lakeside row. Like me, he was watching the boats. I was terribly in love with him, but we were separated by race and by the fact that he hated me. Johnny was nineteen, which was my age, and we had both spent every night of the summer here—I did it because I was broke and Johnny did it because Ngoc was a widow and needed him to help her run this restaurant she'd maintained after her husband's death so that Johnny could maintain it after her own. He lit the little red candle in the booth, where he'd seated a lonely and enormous woman, and nodded at me on his way to the kitchen. I went over to the table and put down some dry noodles and a stained silver teapot and turned over a white china cup and poured some tea in it, and the woman swivelled her body toward me and gave me the smile you give a waitress if you're the kind of person who is nice to a waitress, and I saw that the woman was my ex-psychiatrist. I knocked over the cup and the tea spilled onto the table and then onto her lap.

I'm sorry, I said, I'm sorry.

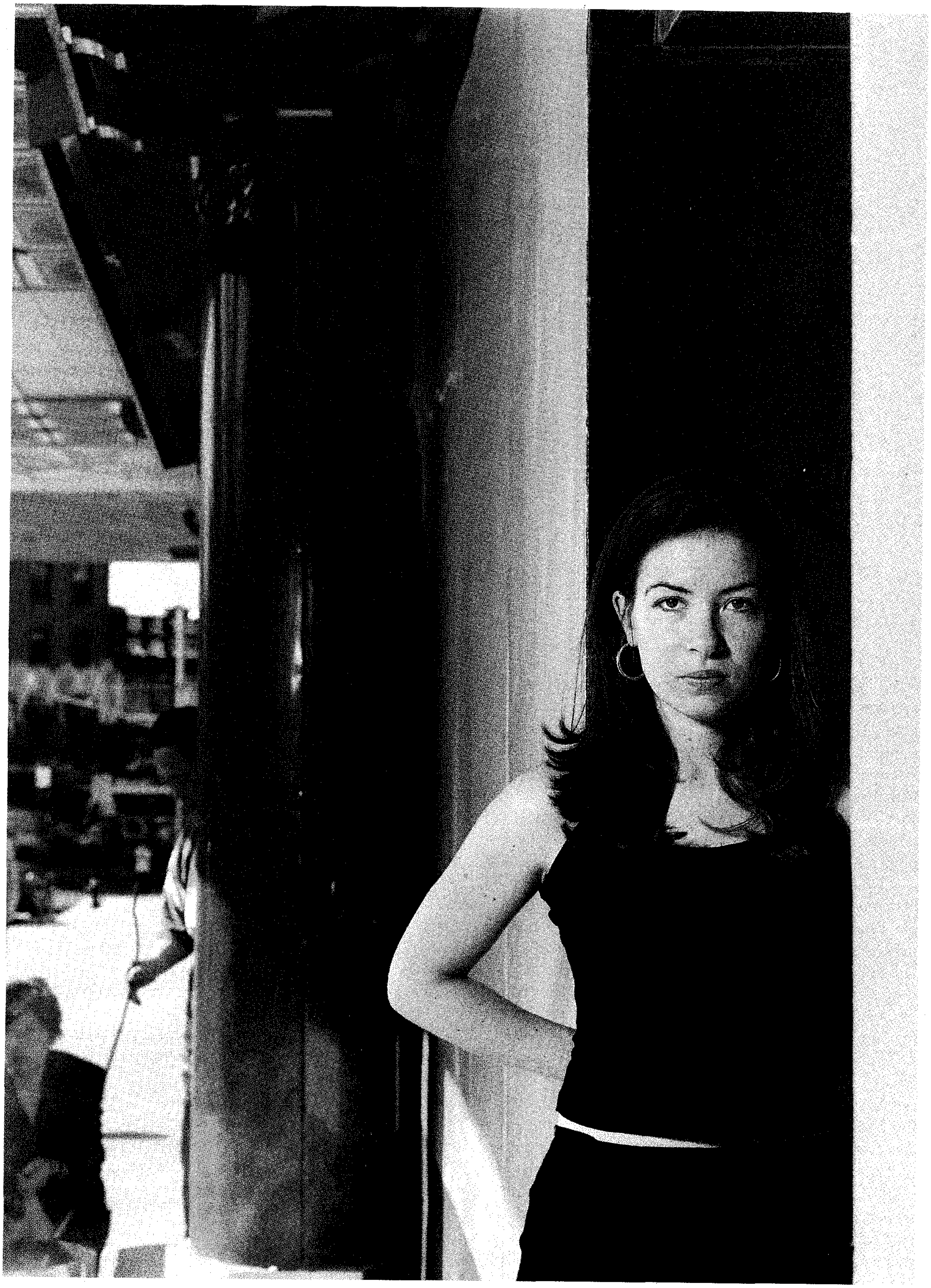
I watched her face go through a set of "If A, then B; if B, then C; A, therefore C," after which she said, Hi, how *are* you, as if to say, Is everything O.K. now? with an element of I am neither your mother nor your relative but I do care for you to the degree that my highly stretched human resources allow, and I said, Good, good, to mean Everything is good, your efforts were successful, and please feel happy about the energy you invested in me.

The next day was the start of Bike Week, a five-day festival during which a hundred thousand bikers would arrive and celebrate being bikers in our very small and beautiful town. On the last night of that week, I would have fourteen tables and I would tell them their food was almost ready but that would be a lie, since I'd mismatched three tables' worth of orders and none of them would eat sooner than an hour after being sat, and they would each tip me nothing, to say, You are worth nothing, or one dollar, to say, You are worth crap; except for those people who were nicest and least likely to complain and whom I would therefore serve last. They would not eat for an hour and a half. These people would tip me a twenty and I would wonder at their foolishness and give the twenty to Ken the cook, who sold coke in the basement, and who'd been shipped in by Ngoc from China and housed in a rat-shack next door. He knew how to say "shitfucker" and "asslick" and had a habit of wiping his dick with his hands then not washing them and telling me about it, charades style.

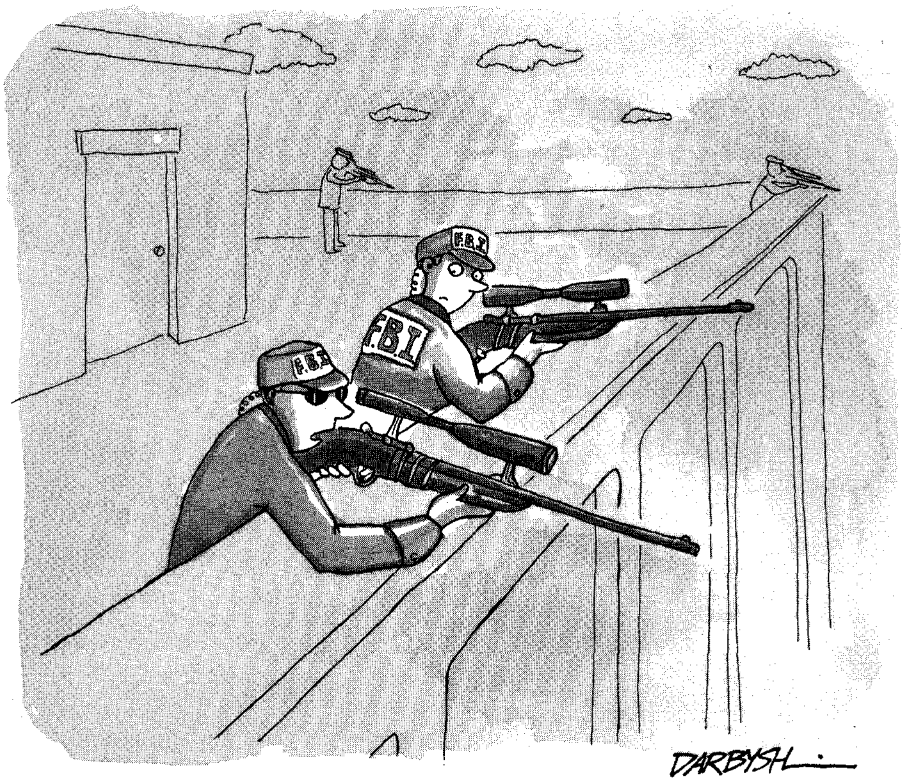
Ngoc knew about this but couldn't do much. She was old and strange-looking and dyed her hair black and wore rhinestone-studded mauve gowns that she thought added elegance to the general atmosphere of the restaurant. The restaurant was very red and very gold. Ngoc bussed tables, and supervised the kitchen, and the bar, and us, and at night I watched her bending over the counter in front, adding columns of figures without a calculator. She couldn't control the cooks, but she kept them on because they were illegal and worked cheap. All of the cooks were wrinkled and small and had perms; once a month, they pitched in and took a cab downtown, where they bought hookers and sat for their perms.

Ken the cook cut five wide lines for a twenty in a boxed-goods room behind the meat rack in the basement, which is where Ngoc would find us, and Ngoc would be in an intolerant mood that night because the same bikers who came every year, a group of them, fat and bearded and staggering drunk, had stopped her in the lobby and chanted, Ngoc, Ngoc, Ngoc, give us a chink hug, Ngoc, give us a chink hug, and Ngoc had had to totter on over in her heels and her Elvira dress and scream, So good to see you! So good to see you! and press herself against each one of their enormous bodies. When Ngoc found the cook and me doing lines in the basement she'd have some things to say to us in Cantonese and then some things to say to us in English, which would be that there is one kind of trash and there is another kind of trash and neither kind was trash that she wanted in her Eating Establishment.

But this shift was slow. I'd spent most of it putting purple tissue umbrellas in drinks and asking customers what they'd seen in town so far and telling them where they might want to go. And, even though they did not want and had not ordered dessert, I'd been bringing out ten fortune cookies on an egg-roll plate with a pile of pineapple chunks topped by whipped cream and my specialty, umbrella-lodged-in-cherry; because I remembered, when I



Rebecca Curtis at the Mahayana Buddhist Temple in Chinatown, New York City. Photograph by Andrea Artz.



"I'll be damned—a Bachman's warbler on the President's limo!"

was a kid, how excited I'd been whenever we went out to eat Chinese, and how despite the fact that we took ten minutes to study the menu we always knew exactly what we would order, which was pork fried rice, sweet-and-sour chicken, egg foo yung, and beef teriyaki, none of which were really Chinese, and I remembered how the waitress would bring out, for the finale, a plate heaped with cherries and pineapple chunks and fortune cookies, and once my sister's cookie had said, "You will discover great wealth," and then in the parking lot she found a dime and for years after that I waited for my cookies to come true.

The cherries and umbrellas came from Jud the bartender and Jud did not like my taking them, but he let me because he was short and missing two teeth and wanted to fuck me. He had a boat and a house on the promenade and was one of those people who sat on their widow's walk on bright days and watched the tourists, evaluating their stupidity or their level of ugliness. I'm going boating this week, he'd say. Want to go boating? Next week, I'd say, and he'd say, Remind me. He looked a little like Don Johnson, some people had told him, and this is what kept him happy, I think.

In the kitchen I found towels to clean up the tea. My ex-psychiatrist was my ex-counsellor, really, ex-family counsellor, one in a long line of psychiatrists that at first my family, and then just I, had consulted. She was a fat ugly lesbian. Her partner, or maybe just her lover, had arrived while I was fetching the towels. I say "lover" because they seemed to be on a date. They were nervous with happiness and had elected to sit next to each other, on the same side of the booth, facing one of the restaurant's decorative highlights, a red-and-gold dragon gleefully humping a column. I figured this side-by-side seating to be an announcement of love, a fuck-you to the world, and I was embarrassed for them, and for myself, to be serving my ex-psychiatrist here in this shitty place, and for her, to be eating here in this shitty place, because she weighed two hundred and sixty pounds and there was nothing on our menu that it was a good idea for her to eat. She'd never told me what she weighed but I knew anyway because I was an excellent evaluator of body weight; this ability was, in part, why three years ago I had driven weekly to her horrible office.

I was standing with my waitress notepad at my chest. The boats were sliding into their places at the docks. Johnny was looking on from the lobby, to make sure I did not spill any more tea, and I thought about pleading stomach ache so I could leave early and not have to serve dinner to my ex-shrink, but that would have sounded as if I had my period, which would have been gross, and Johnny liked me little enough already.

My ex-psychiatrist said, This is my friend Angela. Then we had a round of inquiry and solicitation which was not strictly necessary since we would probably not see each other again. This woman had sat across from me for six months and told me repeatedly that I was not a bad person, was in fact a good person, and because I do not like to talk and managed to get her to talk instead, she told me that people had been unkind to her all her life and that she had suffered great sadness and once tried to end it all with some cooking oil and a match, but ended up with a fist-size patch of blackness on her skull and soft white skin grafts on her calves, and that she was now dealing with an eating disorder herself, which was obesity, and that she found that Harry's Diet Pretzels were a wonderful help and made you feel full and at peace, as if you did not need anything else, and she gave me an extra bag that she happened to have in her purse because the sadness could come upon you at any time, and it was best to have Harry's Diet Pretzels with you when it did.

I took their orders. I recommended lo mein. I said, Everyone likes it. I did not say, Everyone likes it because it is noodles in oil, and you will like it, too. They ordered lo mein and Szechuan grand worbar, a fancy chicken thing that sizzles over a blue flame on an iron plate in front of the customer, which I normally liked to serve because it guaranteed a good tip. I did not want a good tip. I wanted a shitty tip. I wanted a shitty tip so I could have a reason for hating the fat ugly lesbian, a reason other than that she had once seen me cry.

The lover was polite in a cold, challenging way. I said Ngoc's special tea was shipped straight from Shanghai and that our cook was famous in Hong Kong, and she nodded as if something unpleasant had just been confirmed. I guessed how their pre-soup conversation would go.

Former patient?

Yes.

Bad one?

Yes.

Think she's better now?

Probably not. I hope so. She means well.

I delivered a pineapple plate to a family of seven who had ordered cheap and were excited to see it. Johnny was waiting for me in the kitchen, leaning against the industrial tea bins.

You know those women?

I had a tray full of chicken bones and half-eaten egg foo yung from the happy family. I set my tray on the wash counter and removed the plates and started slopping them off and immediately got some of the slop on my shirt.

You know them? he repeated.

Nope.

What'd they order? Lo mein?

Yup.

He took the tray from me and stashed it with the other trays.

Last party. You're off for the night.

Great. I kept slopping.

You going out?

I racked my dishes and wiped myself.

I don't know.

You got some gravy on your shirt.

I wiped myself again.

Let me know if there's anything going on.

Sure, I said. There was not anything going on, but I wondered what constituted Going On and how I could spin a night of nothing going on into something Going On, and if he would like that, and if he did like that, if he'd like me. But I knew that he did not like me. He was a color in the sea of white which was this state, and he seldom spoke and had no friends, although he worked out all the time and was beautiful. When he mowed the littered and weedy lawn that sloped from the restaurant to the lake, the other waitresses and I found reasons to walk by the open windows every ten minutes or so. Once, at the end of a day when Ngoc had been ill and Johnny had spent twelve hours ferrying unsatisfied customers in and out of the enormous red dining room, I found him sitting at the waitress station with a pile of pink drink umbrellas he'd ruined by pushing them open too forcefully. He'd said, I hate this, meaning this place, and I could tell he hated us, the staff, just as Ngoc hated us, and I guessed Ngoc would import a wife for him as she had for his retarded brother, who was twenty-nine and watched cartoons in the lobby and told knock-knock jokes and did not know how to fuck his wife and actually liked us.

I went downstairs to the basement. It was vast and unlit and I liked it, because down there I was just a person in the basement of a Chinese restaurant. I made my way around the meat racks, which were the size of twin beds and held whole bloody sides of beef. Between dark aisles of boxed goods, there were gallon cans of sweet-and-sour sauce and plastic bags of dry noodles, and one aisle was full of weird figurines—Buddhas and dull golden phoenixes. Ken the cook was sitting there, in the dark, on a cardboard box, hands limp in his lap.

Hi, honey, he said. When he smiled, his mouth was a black pit with white spots. I pulled the chain of the light bulb.

Shitfuck, he screamed.

I pulled the chain again. I didn't really need light.

Hey, he said.

What, I said.

He pointed at the box where he'd set up the lines. You every ten minute. Kill yourself. Stupid. Then he started talking again, but this time he wasn't talking to me and I didn't understand what he was saying anyway. I went ahead, but took less than my share, to prove I wasn't stupid.

I brought my ex-psychiatrist and her lover their soup. It was egg drop, the soup most likely to have a roach at the bottom. All the soups are left out uncovered overnight, but egg drop is thick and yellow and made primarily of yolk, so that the roaches remain undetected at the bottom of the cup until the soup has been eaten. I should add that this wasn't Ngoc's fault. Once a month, Ngoc made us move all the cups and plates and stuff into the dining room, and the exterminators would arrive with their hoses and spray and we'd put the stuff back, but this didn't make a difference. You could pick up a platter or a pile of napkins or a cookie and there'd be a roach underneath.

When their soup came back, the cups looked O.K.: no roaches. My ex-psychiatrist and her lover were happy. They were holding hands. Apparently, my ex-psychiatrist was right-handed and her lover was left-handed and they could hold hands and eat at the same time. When I brought their dinner plates, my ex-psychiatrist asked me, Was I at school and how did I like it, meaning, Was I better? I would take a year off school that fall and move in with an ex-attorney who was dealing some to finance his business-school fees, and my one year off would stretch into five; but I did not know that yet and I said, Yes, I was at school, and I liked it.

In the kitchen, Ken asked did I want to lick his cock, which was one of the things he knew how to say, and I said, Lao shi, which I thought meant Asshole but which I later learned meant Teacher. My other tables had finished their dinners. I was nearly done for the night. I stood in the kitchen hoping Johnny might come in, because I felt I was ready to tell him there was something going on. Ngoc and her retarded son and the cooks were playing mah-jongg on the floor. Ngoc had lit the kitchen shrine—a candle in front of a foot-high Buddha, with three oranges at its base. She had a glass of something from the bar and was screeching and laughing periodically, which seemed to indicate that she was lessening her vigilance, but when she saw me standing and waiting for Johnny she said I could polish pupu platters or fold napkins if I wasn't busy, so I ducked back into the dining room.

In the dark, the lit globes on the tables looked elegant. Outside the pilot lights of the boats were still moving slowly through the channel. At midnight, there would be fireworks you could watch from the water or the beach. This happened every Friday night; it was part of the town's effort to make itself attractive to summer vacationers and perhaps to itself. I was living on a nearby island with two girls, twins, whose parents had money and let them live in this house that was connected to the mainland by a bridge. When these girls finished college, they would decide not to be investment bankers after all but to move to Venice Beach to try to break into movies, and then television, and then commercials. I'm still waiting to see them in commercials. I would like for something to happen for these girls, particularly because that night I decided people should come over to the house, lots of people, and I would in fact begin inviting people at the restaurant and continue doing so all the way home, walking along the boulevard in my skirt, so that there would be something going on to bring Johnny to, and this party would end in a fire that would climb from a guest bedroom to the attic and the roof, and which would make this the last summer these girls spent on this island.

I set up my prep tray by the lesbians' table so that when their food was ready they could see their Szechuan grand worbar flame up in front of them. This woman, my former psychiatrist, or former family counsellor, and her partner, or lover, were talking so intently, about something so deeply philosophical (I gathered from the few words I caught), that I felt a certain sadness. She no longer pretended to be obliged to talk to me, as if she knew it was a larger kindness simply to let me be her waitress and not someone she had once known.

The first time we met, my entire family had driven out to her home. There was a "Welcome Friends" wreath on the door and decorative wooden ducks in the hall. We sat in her living room and my father made her cry. She asked some questions, which I answered, and my father said some things that were not answers to the questions, and she told him please to refrain from interrupting others or speaking in a loud, angry tone, and he said she really knew nothing about our family, since she was not part of our family, and that she in fact had interrupted him, and that so far her ideas were crazy, and that in his family, since he was the father, he would speak when he wanted to speak and say what he wanted to say.

My mother nodded and put a hand on his leg and said his name in the tone of voice in which someone says Stop, but which really meant "I am your partner in life and I love you whatever you do," because when she spoke she told the lesbian, We need you to work with us. You are not working with us. Then the lesbian said that perhaps it was a good idea for each of my parents, my father particularly, to come individually for counselling, as there seemed to be some issues all around that might bear discussion, and then my father had some things to say about this house we were in and this lesbian counsellor and what he thought of her effectiveness, her intelligence, and her persona, and then the lesbian took a time-out break.

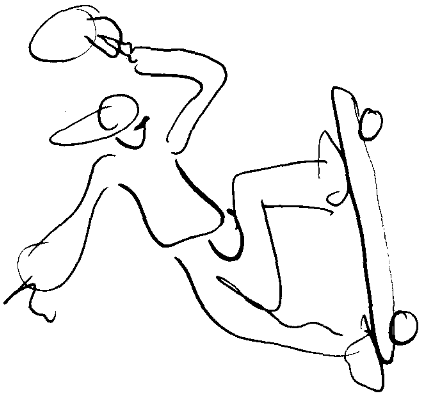
We sat in silence and heard her blubber in the bathroom. It was the happiest time we had known. My mother's hand was on my father's knee. I might have been smirking a little, I don't know why, except that in times of great tension or truthtelling I smirk; also I was pleased to see my father's attention directed at someone else for an extended duration of time.

After that first appointment, at the lesbian's insistence, I was told to go with either my mother or my father, not both, to her office, not her home. But that only happened once, because my father made her cry again. During our second visit, he called her a Monstrous Fat Pig. I had picked up a book about menopause and was reading it because I was pleased that my father and the lesbian had found plenty to talk about by themselves, when my father said, You must weigh . . .

He turned to me. What does she weigh?

Two-sixty, I said.

Two-sixty, he said. You weigh two-sixty and you think you can tell me what to do, how to discipline my own daughter, how to talk to my own daughter? The lesbian counsellor cried pretty soon after that. There might have been more words on my father's part—"manipulative," maybe "controlling," "disappointing," and "freakish aberration of nature." These were words that we both liked. We drove home in a happy silence, almost a camaraderie, in which he said, Beautiful day, and How is school, and How is track—a mood which would last approximately until midnight, when I would puke in the sink and he would walk downstairs from where he had not been sleeping and tell me that I was a shitty little mess who was destroying the family, which was his family, and had I not considered taking myself away to somewhere not this house, because if I did not he surely would take himself away, and how did I imagine my brothers and mother would feel about that?



My order was up. I got the chicken worbar into its vat and trucked the hot iron plate out and set it down on the tray and produced a Sterno can from my pocket. I held the match high for drama before I lit it, and when the Sterno caught the two women clapped. Then I put the can on the plate and poured the chicken from the vat onto the plate, being careful not to pour any into the can itself.

If there's anything else I can do, I said, let me know. Then I went to fold napkins. I did this at a hidden station in the corner of the dining room. I was secretly watching them. They were talking about something I'm sure they did not give a shit about, but they clearly liked each other, and not in a sex way or a passing way but with some deep and generous mutual admiration, enough that they assumed, if they saw me at all, that I was only folding napkins or watching the bow lights of the boats jostling for dock space at the pier, and not watching them, waiting for them to be done.

Johnny came over and sat with me. I kept folding.

Hey, he said.

Hey, I said. He took a pile and folded. I think there's something going on, I said. I told him the people I lived with were having a party. I said Jud would be there. I said other people that he knew would be there. I said he should come. I said that I, in particular, hoped he would come.

He said he had a few other things going on. Then he said maybe he'd come. He paused. Then he said he'd come when he got off work. I got up and left the table because I didn't know what to say next.

The lesbians were looking at me the way you look at a waitress when you're too content to crook your finger at her. I went over to their table. They said they would like, if it was not too much trouble, to take their food home in a box. I tried not to think, while I packed the box, that they would be better off without the extra food, or wonder whether they would eat it that night, individually or together, or how many hours would pass before the sadness would come back.

It was after my father called my shrink a pig that I began going to see her alone and that she suggested the special pretzels. For twenty weeks this counsellor woman saw me at half rate, because my parents would not pay more, and listened to me talk about school or books or people I liked or did not like and what I wished I had done at a certain time or what I wished I had not done, and handed me tissues when she finally got me to cry, and told me that I was a good person, a smart person, a person with whom she liked to talk, and I said, Thank you, thank you, at the end of each hour, and she said, Hug me, and I did, and once she gave me a book, which I was supposed to return by mail but never did, which was pink and called "Healing the Hungry Self" and had careful marginalia at important places in her handwriting, where I wrote, What a fat pig, go on a diet, fat pig, a book I read three times in the hope of being cured.

That night the party would happen. In just a few hours many people would arrive on the island in many cars and carry many bottles of alcohol into the house, which would be lit up, every room, and bottles and lamps would get broken and someone would have brass knuckles and someone else would have a gun and it would get so that Johnny and I had to go outside, down to the beach, and sit on the sand and watch the sky, dizzy with light, and the water, candy-fish bright. There was an anchored dock floating about thirty feet out, and I fixed on the idea of our spending the night on our backs, not talking or touching, but silently being together, and I would open my backpack, there at the beach, the air was still enough, and take out the stash I'd borrowed off Ken and say, I like to do this sometimes, and he'd say, I don't think I want to do that, and I'd say, Don't, then, and leave him a line, and he would say, Why not, and he would like it.

My ex-shrink and her lover were waiting. I brought them the super pineapple dish. I watched them spear pineapple. Ngoc was cursing in the kitchen because she was losing at mah-jongg and the cooks were taking her money again. I heard the resounding low note of a fry pan hitting a soup vat and then the thud of an industrial tea bin crashing against the tiles. The copper lights of the promenade were blinking above the water and a firework flared up prematurely and failed to ignite and the dust cloud spread out against the sky and fell across the waiting white boats.

My ex-psychiatrist came over and took my hand on her way out. I was still folding napkins.

It was so good to see you, she said.

It was good to see you, too, I said. But I didn't mean it.

Their table was neat, pre-cleaned, as if they had foreseen the work I would have to do and wanted to help. The little umbrellas, chopstick wrappers, and soiled napkins were piled on their plates and their chopsticks and silverware were neatly crossed. The tip was good, so as to say, We like you, but not too good, so as to say, We feel bad for you; obviously, you are not cured; obviously, you have failed yourself and us. She'd left a cookie at the edge of the table and I took it and ate it. Then I saw the note she'd left, in familiar blue pen, on the check, as if I were someone she knew well or someone she still wanted to help. It said, You are kindhearted, gentle, and beloved. ♦

From a letter to the Editor of the Times.

Swimming in the lagoon of Bora-Bora, among the stingrays, is truly an exercise in splendor. Watching sharks eat through your snorkeling goggles is also something to relate to the world.

If you live to tell.

Buy The Aeron® Chair For Less!
- In Stock ... Fast Delivery!
- Thousands Sold
- Authorized Herman Miller Retailer
- Best Price Anywhere! Only **$699!**

Toll Free
877-470-LESS
www.NY.Sit4Less.com

Why just see Italy when you can savor it?
CARAVELLA ITALIA
Intimate Tours for the Discerning Traveler
Groups of 12 or Fewer
NOW BOOKING FOR SEPTEMBER 2001:
Tuscany & Umbria plus Florence
888.665.2112 seeitaly.com

Recapture Your Childhood!
Nancy Schön is offering a limited edition of 250 of her famous sculpture as seen in the Boston Public Garden, **"Make Way for Ducklings"** from the story by Robert McCloskey. A scale reproduction in bronze mounted on Travertine marble, 24"L x 4"W x 4"H. Each sculpture comes with a signed and numbered Certificate of Authenticity. ***For more Information Call (617) 969-7214***
e-mail:Nancyschon@mediaone.net – website: www.schon.com

IS YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE LIMITING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR BUSINESS?
FREE DOWNLOAD
WWW.NEWMANAGEMENTSTYLE.COM

Tunisia
- Cultural/Historical Tours
- Jewish Heritage
- Custom Itineraries
- Plus Much More...

TunisUSA *The Specialists in Tunisia Travel*
(800)474-5500 • 610-995-2788
www.TunisUSA.com
VISA

MEN'S WIDE SHOES
EEE-EEEEEE, SIZES 5-13
FREE catalog • High quality
160 styles • 1-800-992-WIDE
HITCHCOCK SHOES, INC.
Dept. 69G Hingham, MA 02043 www.wideshoes.com

THE CRITICS

THE SKY LINE

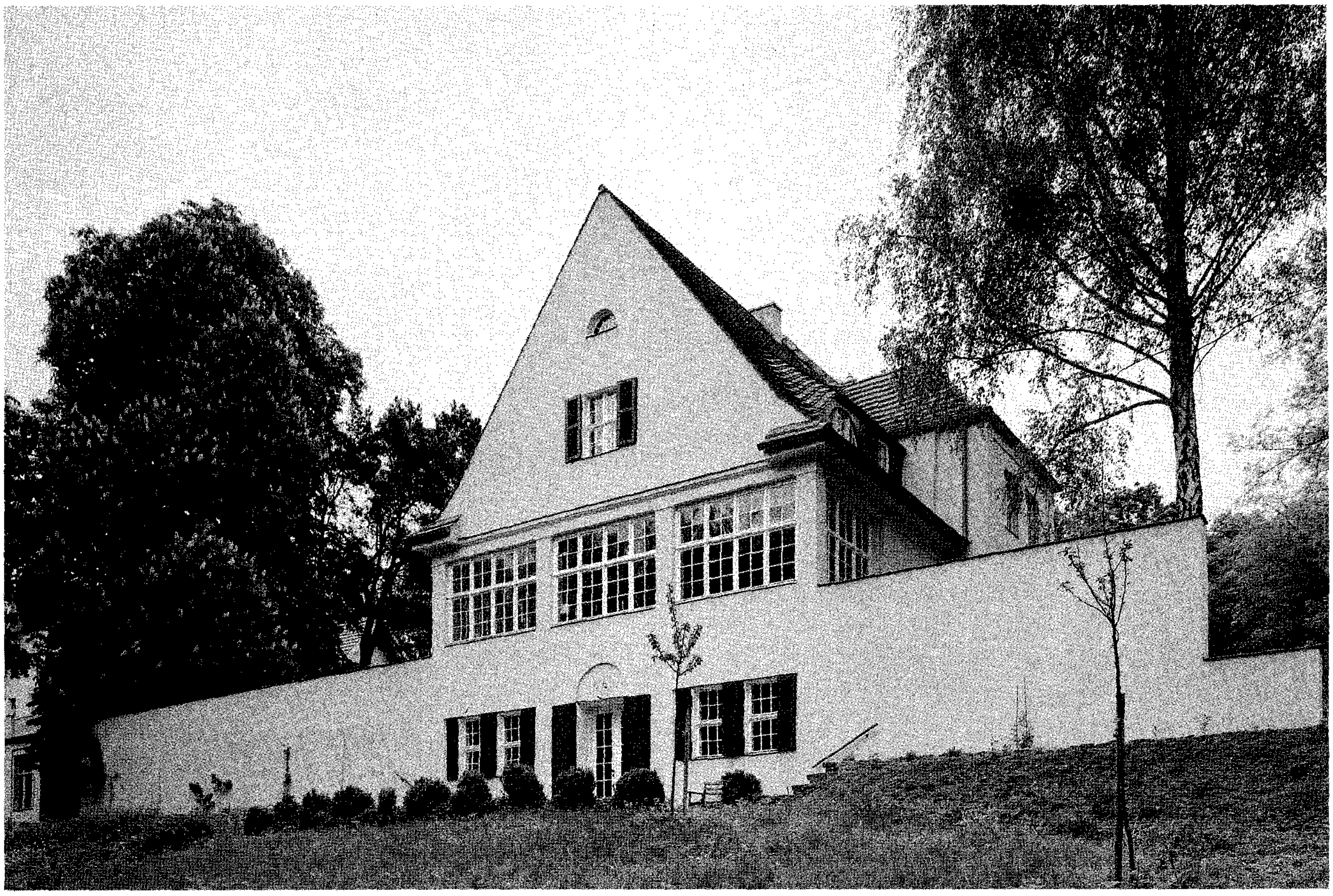
HOUSE PROUD

Mies van der Rohe and Robert Venturi at three museums.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

In 1954, when Phyllis Lambert, an aspiring architect and the daughter of Samuel Bronfman, the head of Seagram, was asked by her father to decide who should design his new headquarters on Park Avenue, she considered every big name from Frank Lloyd Wright to Le Corbusier to Louis Kahn. She chose Mies van der Rohe because, she wrote, "the younger men, the second generation, are talking in terms of Mies or denying him." Forty-three years after the bronze-and-glass Seagram Building was finished and thirty-two years after Mies's death, they still can't stop talking about him. There is something about the purity of Mies's buildings, the Platonic perfection they aspire to, that generates awe, even in an age that has no interest in modernism's dreams. Mies's buildings look like the simplest things you could imagine, yet they are among the richest works of architecture ever created. Modern architecture was supposed to remake the world, and Mies was at the center of the revolution, but he was also a counter-revolutionary who designed beautiful things. His spare, minimalist objects are exquisite. He is the only modernist who created a language that ranks with the architectural languages of the past, and while this has sometimes been troubling for his reputation—it seems, falsely, easy to imitate a Mies building, in the same way it seems easy to knock off a Greek temple—his architectural forms become more astonishing as time goes on.

For a long while, Mies's legacy seemed defined less by his own buildings than by their awful progeny. The glass boxes on Third Avenue diminished the Seagram Building, or clouded its glory, anyway. Modern architecture made a mess of cities, and the architect who was the god of glass towers had to share



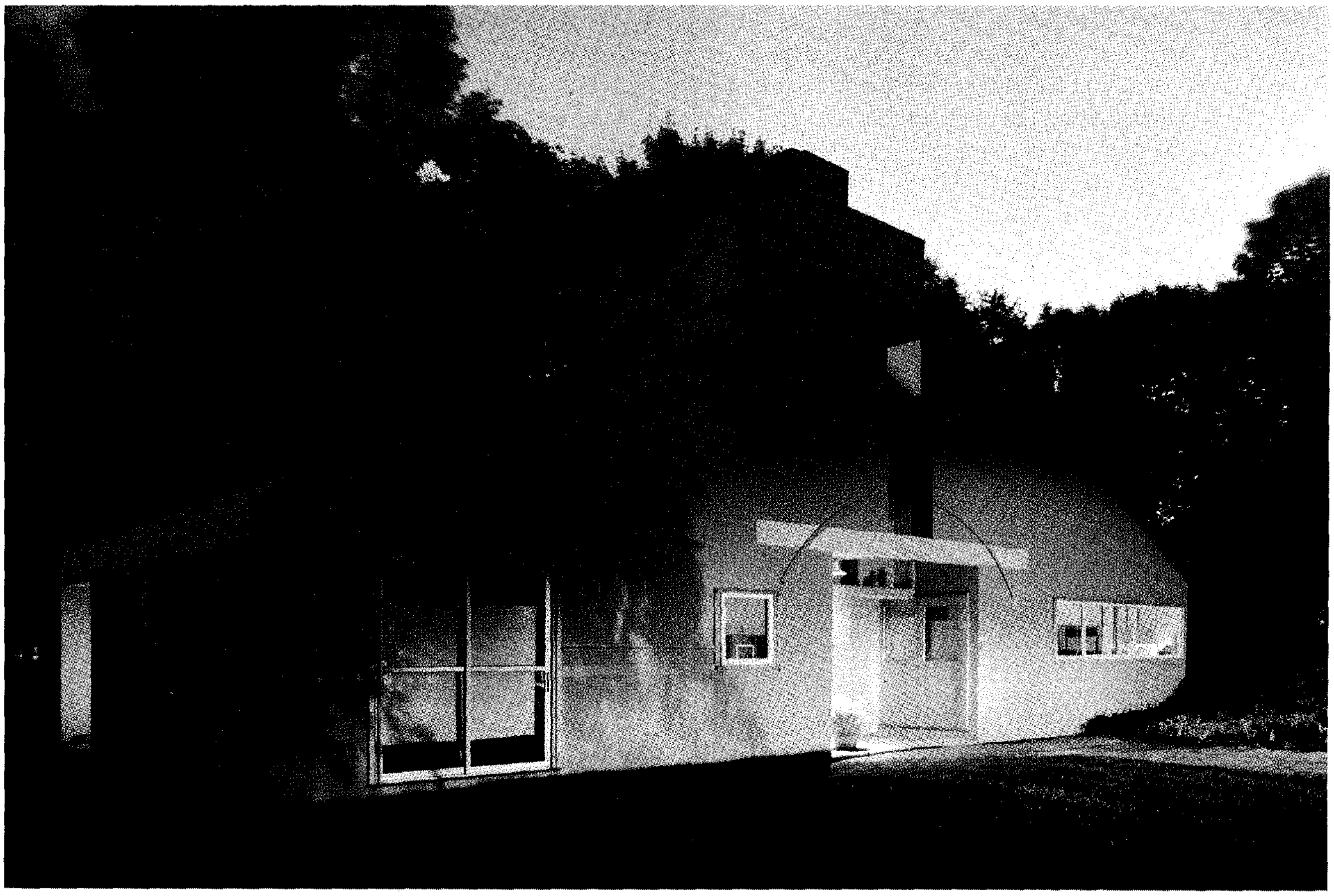
One side of Mies van der Rohe's Riehl House (1907) overlooks a garden. The terrace above the retaining wall was originally open.

some of the blame. But we have been through a full cycle now, not only of wretched modern skyscrapers in the nineteen-sixties and seventies but also of second-rate postmodern skyscrapers in the nineteen-eighties and nineties, those buildings that, in deliberate reaction to Mies's austerity, were sheathed in stone with lots of decoration. The aura of freshness that surrounds Mies these days comes, at least in part, from the authenticity of his buildings. They are not imitations, and they are not responses to something else, and they are not intended to make a rhetorical point.

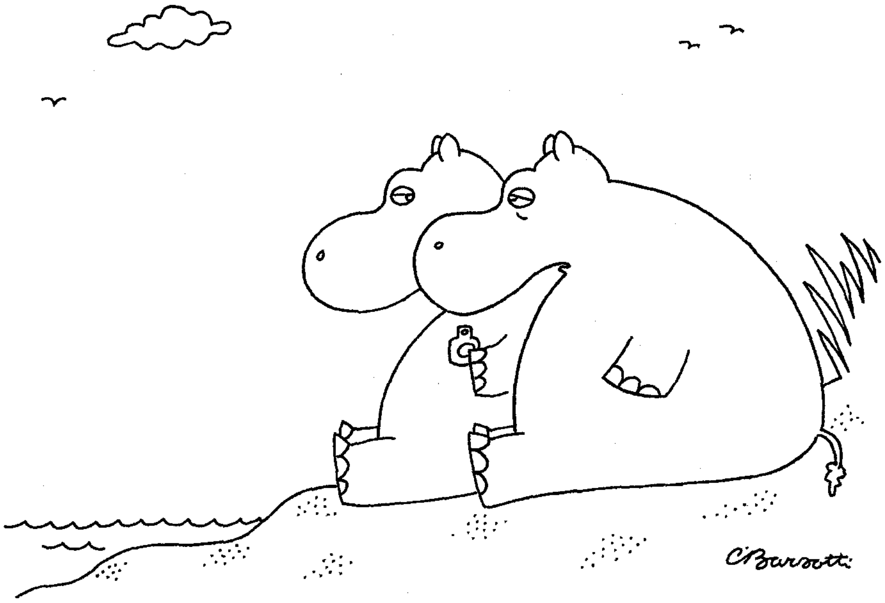
It is finally possible to look at Mies with a clear head, and both Lambert, the founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, and Terence Riley, the chief curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art, where the Mies archive is housed, have done exactly that in a pair of exhibitions which, taken together, constitute the most complete survey of the architect's work ever produced. The two museums split the turf. "Mies in Berlin," the exhibition at MOMA, tracks Mies from a house he designed as a twenty-one-year-old architect in Germany in 1907, through his years as the head of the Bauhaus, and ends in 1938, the year he fled Germany for the United States. (He was famously apolitical, and was not so much escaping persecution as leaving a place that clearly was inclined to give more work to Albert Speer.) The Canadian Centre exhibition, "Mies in America," which has been mounted at the Whitney Museum in a simultaneous run with the Modern show (it will go to Montreal later), starts with his years as an eminent refugee in Chicago, where he designed the campus for the Illinois Institute of Technology, ran its architecture school, and before long became the philosopher-king of American modern architects.

Mies would seem to have been an odd man for that last role: his English was terrible, he wrote no books or significant treatises, he was more interested in building than in theorizing. Yet within a few years of his arrival in Chicago he had become the most powerful aesthetic force in American architecture after Frank Lloyd Wright. Mies lacked Wright's passion for keeping himself in the public eye, but he appealed to the corporate executives who commissioned buildings. By the late nineteen-forties, as Wright's career was waning, Mies was beginning to design high-rise apartment towers for real-estate developers. He had produced famous theoretical schemes for skyscrapers in Germany, but he had never managed to build much beyond some private houses and several portions of the huge Weissenhof housing project in Stuttgart. In America, he found businessmen who were willing to let him function in the real world. They must have mistaken him for a pragmatist. (Samuel Bronfman, for whom Mies designed what at the time was probably the most expensive office building ever built, had no such illusions, or lost them early in the game.) Mies was blunt, he smoked cigars, he didn't waste time rhapsodizing about the glories of architecture. His only real interest was in physical form, and he was fanatical in his search for ways to perfect it.

His obsessiveness led to a certain



The Vanna Venturi House in Philadelphia (1959–64) was built by Robert Venturi for his mother. Photographs by Robert Polidori.



"Geez—you used all the sunscreen?"

• •

cultishness, and to the development of a group of Miesians who worked directly for him or, like the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, produced architecture in his mold. (The Skidmore firm was known as "Three Blind Mies.") As Mies became more important, a party line developed about his architecture: it was simple, it was pure, it was utterly rational. According to the canon, his career was a progression toward higher refinement and exactitude. A corollary to this was the belief that his architecture was better than what was around it and, for that reason, owed very little to what was around it. Mies's buildings stood aloof as Mies himself stood aloof. "Less is more," the master said, which explained everything.

The current exhibitions gracefully unravel the myths of Mies while doing no harm to his reputation. At the Modern, Riley and his co-curator, the architectural historian Barry Bergdoll, have turned up numerous early projects that show how Mies was connected to the cultural context of Berlin in the nineteen-twenties, and how his modernist vocabulary did not come to him in a moment of epiphany but grew gradually, poking its way at first into some early houses that could almost be mistaken for traditional German houses of the turn of the century. The most striking of these, the Riehl House, built for a philosophy professor and his wife near Potsdam in 1907, looks from the front like a two-story stucco cottage with a pitched roof and window shutters, but from the side it is almost abstract. A huge, plain gable overhangs a loggia, below which the land falls away, and the house appears to sit on a long, flat podium, with a sleekness that is prescient of the architect's later work. Although it was built when Mies was only twenty-one, in later life he was not interested in having been a prodigy. He discouraged Philip Johnson from including a photograph of the Riehl House in an exhibition of his work mounted at the Museum of Modern Art in 1947—the first significant introduction of Mies's architecture to American audiences. By that time, both Mies and Johnson thought that the traditional elements of the Riehl House and his other early houses subverted his image as the consummate rational modernist, and together they began to construct the view of Mies that is more or less what prevails today.

The truth is that Mies's architecture isn't much more rational than Stanford White's. Mies was a romantic, and what he was romantic about was the notion of beautiful and serene modern buildings. He would do almost anything to make them look like temples of pure reason. Most of Mies's buildings were a lot more complicated than they appeared, and he was as willing as any other architect to indulge in ornament when it suited his purposes. If you look carefully at the Seagram Building, you see that its exterior isn't flat, but is lined with little I-beams between the windows. They aren't part of the structure. They were put there to provide texture and to make the building softer on the eye—Mies's version of classical moldings. On the sides of the Seagram, where the structural engineers had demanded solid concrete walls to stabilize the narrow tower against heavy winds, Mies covered the surface with marble, then placed a grid of bronze I-beams on top of the marble so that it would look exactly like the framing around the windows elsewhere in the building. This is fakery, and it is lovely.

Mies's American buildings have been studied to death, and, while there is nothing like the little-known Riehl house to discover here, the Whitney show does—or it did for me—alter the perception of Mies as an architect who hated cities. He did several groupings of towers in his career—the 860-880 Lake Shore Drive Apartments in Chicago, the Federal Center in Chicago, Dominion Center in Toronto, Westmount Square in Montreal—that are generally thought of as collections of boxes plopped down with no regard for the pattern of city streets around them. But, in fact, in each case the towers are arranged to create an open space at ground level that is magnificently proportioned—at once intimate and grand. The open space and the masses of the tower slabs are expertly balanced, with void playing off solid. And every one of these compositions seems entirely at peace with the old streets that surround it. Mies opens the streetscape up, but he doesn't destroy it. Just as the plaza in front of the Seagram Building strengthens rather than weakens Park Avenue (unlike almost every other plaza, which feels like a useless gash in the street wall), the public space in Mies's other large projects relates to the old urban fabric with respect and gentleness. If "Mies in Berlin" connects the architect's work to a broader cultural context, then "Mies in America" connects it more clearly than ever before to physical context.

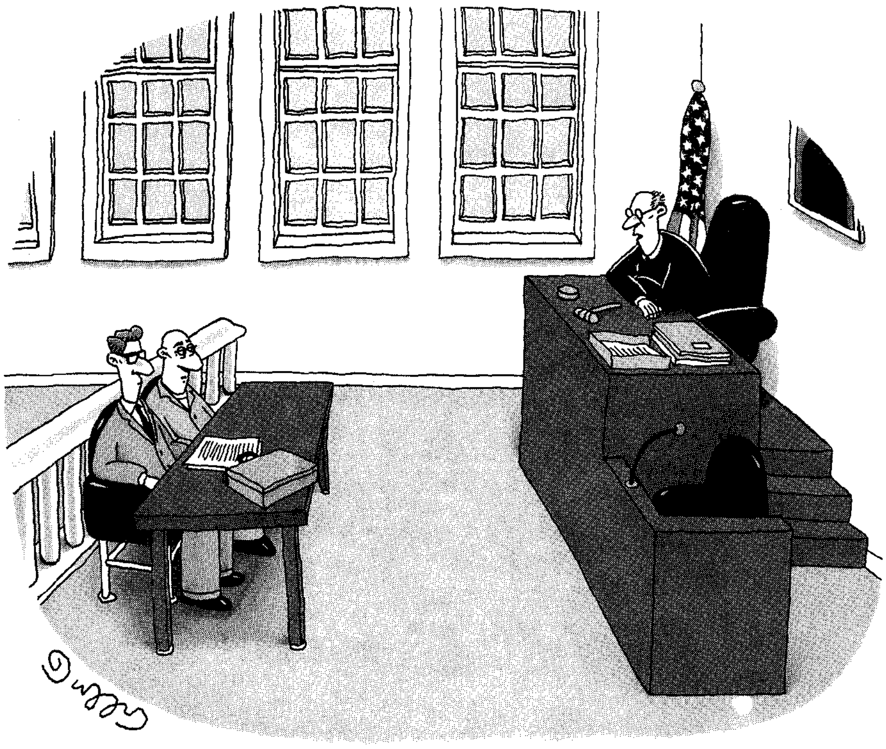
Of all the architects who have tried to take Mies on, the one who got the farthest, in a way, was Robert Venturi, whose remark "Less is a bore," in the opening pages of his 1966 book, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture," became almost as famous as Mies's original line. Venturi's position was that Miesian abstraction had nothing to do with real life, and not a lot to do with the history of architecture, either, since the great architecture of the past was never as simple as Mies wanted his buildings to appear to be. And, while Mies's pristine objects might be beautiful, Venturi argued, they had little to do with the realities of our difficult and ironic time.

For at least a decade following the publication of his book, Venturi and his wife and partner, Denise Scott Brown, were the most important architectural thinkers in the United States, the people who, like Mies in the fifties, everyone else either followed or reacted against. When Scott Brown and Venturi, along with Steven Izenour, wrote "Learning from Las Vegas," which argued that the commercial strip was to the United States what Baroque church façades were to Rome, they seemed to be deliberately provoking sanctimonious middlebrow good taste. But if Mies was the sort of architect who made real-estate developers think that they could elevate themselves by hiring him, Venturi and Scott Brown turned off the people who built major commercial and civic buildings. Their architecture is funky and élitist at the same time. They talk and write about popular taste, but for the most part they've built houses and cultural institutions for a sophisticated clientele.

Venturi and Scott Brown's home city of Philadelphia has never given them a major commission, unless you count the new building for the Philadelphia Orchestra, a project that they designed and lost to another architect, Rafael Viñoly, whose style was thought to have more appeal in the fund-raising department. Philadelphia is now making up for this with "Out of the Ordinary," an elaborate retrospective of the firm's work, curated by Kathryn B. Hiesinger at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It is as important, in its way, as the Mies exhibitions, or the huge retrospective of Frank Gehry's work now on view at the Guggenheim. (With Gehry, Venturi, and Mies running simultaneously, this is the greatest summer for architectural exhibitions I can remember.)

The main part of the exhibition is a mix of models, drawings, and photographs. Venturi has always drawn beautifully, and it is wonderful to see his old sketches. There are a few special objects, including a full-scale reproduction of a big three-dimensional coffee cup that Venturi hung above the door of a restaurant he designed in 1962 and, better still, a full-size reproduction of the façade of the house that he designed for his mother, Vanna, in the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia at around the same time. The façade, which you have to pass through to get to the part of the exhibition devoted to houses, is an exhilarating coup de théâtre. The Vanna Venturi house—pale green, with a split gable and simple moldings—may be the most famous American house by an American architect after Philip Johnson's Glass House. It is at once sweet and monumental, like a child's drawing of a house, but also a complex, subtle play on architectural history, with allusions to such masterworks as Blenheim Palace. It's a house with a subject: the image of a house. In the nineteen-sixties, when houses were either modernist boxes or replicas of traditional style, Venturi went off in another direction.

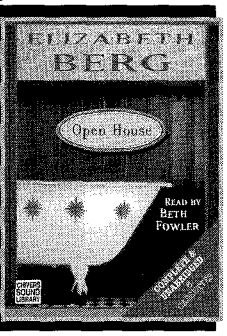
That direction eventually led to postmodernism, which Venturi and Scott Brown have come to disavow. I don't blame them, and not only because postmodern is now a term used mainly in the Sunday real-estate ads to describe McMansions. Venturi and Scott Brown are really modern architects, not postmodernists or historical revivalists. They didn't want to copy history, only to acknowledge it, and to weave allusions to other things into their work. They are modern Mannerists, really. Just as sixteenth-century Mannerists like Michelangelo distorted the elements of Renaissance architecture for greater effect, Venturi and Scott Brown play with modernism. They love thinness and lightness as much as Mies did, but for them thinness involves pictures of things. The quintessential Venturi object is his Chippendale dining chair, which looks like a cutout of a tradi-



"No, it's either community service or jail time, counsellor. Attending 'Riverdance' is not a sentencing option."

PLANT A PIECE OF HISTORY
The Return of the American Elm.
The Princeton American Elm: 79 Years of Success
NOW THE MOST POPULAR TREE OF ALL TIME
IS AVAILABLE AGAIN FOR ONLY $39.95! (+S&H)
Produced from cuttings from an American Elm, selected in 1922 for classic attributes, these trees are Dutch Elm disease tolerant. These fast-growing 2½ to 4' trees are easy to plant, hardy in most parts of the country, and grow 3' to 6' a year! Each tree comes with a planting kit and instructions.
JUST VISIT US AT
AMERICANELM.COM
OR CALL TODAY
1-888-680-1922
Riveredge FARMS

CHIVERS AUDIO BOOKS
— Unabridged Rentals —
THE BEST Authors, Readers & Recordings at the LOWEST Rental Prices!
(800) 704-2005 or Fax (603) 929-3890
Box 1450 ◆ Hampton, NH 03843-1450



JACKSON HOLE, WY.
The most Spectacular Home
In the most Incredible Area
For Information Call:
1-307-690-4001

LONDON
Short Term Rental Private Flats & Houses
TOLL FREE 1-800 748 9783
TEL: +44 (0) 20 7233 8111 FAX: +44 (0) 20 7233 9101
E-mail: info@homefromhome.co.uk
Internet: www.HFHLondon.com
Home From Home

THE POKE BOAT®
IT'S EVERYTHING A CANOE ISN'T.
It weighs only 22 pounds. You can buy more than a canoe.
859-986-2336

Walk & Taste Italy
Join our small groups for spectacular walks and fabulous food with expert guides.
Brochure: 1-800-462-7911
www.italian-connection.com

tional carved chair with a pattern printed on it.

I don't think any other architects could have designed the Sainsbury Wing at the National Gallery in London, the firm's most sumptuous public building and perhaps the greatest essay in Mannerism of our time; or the checkerboard-fronted addition to Cass Gilbert's art museum at Oberlin College; or the Hôtel du Département de la Haute-Garônne, in Toulouse, France, a series of government buildings that constitute their largest built work to date. In each case, patterns in the form of traditional ornament are placed over sleek, modern surfaces, as if to proclaim both the importance of decoration and the futility of using it in the traditional, three-dimensional way.

Image is as important as reality to Venturi and Scott Brown, which isn't what you hear from traditionalists or postmodernists. It isn't even what you hear from Frank Gehry, who in some ways is a much more traditional architect than Robert Venturi. Gehry designs astonishing shapes, and they pack an emotional wallop. His work is easy to experience as something sensual, where Venturi is almost always cerebral. Gehry offers new shapes, and Venturi offers a wry take on old ones. No wonder Gehry is more popular.

Venturi could be called the most radical architect alive, however, just on the evidence of a project in the Philadelphia exhibition that was never built, and has been almost forgotten—his prize-winning entry in a competition in 1967 for the National Collegiate Football Hall of Fame. He proposed what he called the "Bill-Ding-Board," a shed-like exhibition structure set behind an immense electronic signboard that was to rise to twice the building's height. The signboard would continuously project images of classic football plays, while the interior would contain a display of football relics and more projections of film on the barrel-vaulted ceiling. Venturi maintained that this was an electronic version of the painted ceilings of Baroque churches.

Today, we talk about how cyberspace is changing the nature of built space, but this project, designed thirty-four years ago, is the first instance I know of in which an architect said, in effect, that the information is the building. Frank Gehry would never dream of doing such a thing. It's more in the line of Liz Diller and Ric Scofidio, the team of architects who have built a career on the creation of projects that blur the distinction between media and architecture, and who use technology to create new kinds of spatial perceptions. Venturi was there first. The technology wasn't really even ready for his idea in 1967. He envisioned making his electronic football plays with two hundred thousand light bulbs. Today, his billboard would look like a vast television screen.

In some of Venturi and Scott Brown's work, like the small, shingled houses the firm has built in Nantucket and Westchester County, the desire to play around with the idea of image recedes somewhat, and convention is tweaked more quietly. Most of the time, though, their architecture is a dance through history that embraces everything from hamburger stands to cathedrals. The exhibition in Philadelphia ends with a section designed by Venturi and Scott Brown themselves—a sort of coda but with a tone very different from that of the main galleries. The rest of the exhibition is a bit dry and academic, and this last part is exuberant. It has one billboard-sized wall displaying a series of Venturi and Scott Brown aphorisms ("Ugly & ordinary is better than heroic & original"; "The validity of clutter"; etc.) and another containing Venturi's take on "The Architect's Dream," Thomas Cole's famous painting of an architect contemplating a perfect classical city. In Venturi's version, there are McDonald's arches, Coca-Cola signs, and screens that parade video collages of buildings he and Scott Brown have done and things they love (Stickley furniture, Beethoven, Thai food, pumpkins, Italian palazzos, eggplants). The rest of the exhibition hasn't misrepresented Venturi and Scott Brown, however. They view the world with irony, but they take their own work straight, without much humor. They don't acknowledge that an ironic commentary about popular style isn't the same as popular style. Mannerism was never taken up by the masses, and it is never going to be, no matter how brilliantly Venturi and Scott Brown reinvent it for our time. ◆

BOOKS

LAURA'S WORLD

What a deaf-blind girl taught the nineteenth century.

BY LOUIS MENAND

The house in which Laura Bridgman was born, in 1829, sits on a remote dirt road in a tiny New Hampshire village, now called Etna, on the outskirts of Hanover. The Bridgmans were farmers; they were also evangelical Baptists, and it is possible to imagine, driving by their farm, on the edge of a mountain, or walking through the small, hilly graveyard nearby, where the family is buried, how hard and how narrowly focussed their lives must have been. In the winter of 1832, when Laura had just turned two, the family was stricken with scarlet fever. Two of the children died, and though Laura survived, it was a close call. Her convalescence took two years, and by the time she was able to walk again she had lost all the sight in one eye and almost all in the other; she retained only the faintest sense of taste and smell; and she was completely deaf. The little sight she had was destroyed when (horribly) she punctured the eyeball by walking into a spindle projecting from her mother's spinning wheel. She had long since stopped talking. She was five, and had only two attenuated senses and one intact sense—touch—left to her. Later on, though, after she learned to express herself by using a manual alphabet (pressing her fingers into the hand of her interlocutor), she used to say that she had in fact four senses: taste, smell, touch, and what she called the sense of "think." It is a brilliant remark, for it sums up, in its ingenuous way, one of the meanings of her story.

During the course of her lifetime—she lived to be fifty-nine—many people claimed to have discovered the meaning of the Laura Bridgman story. The principal figure among these was the man who (in his own rendering of events) rescued her from her remote farmhouse and her parents' fundamentalism, carried her off to enlightened, Unitarian Boston, and restored her to humanity by conferring on her the gift of language. This was Samuel Gridley Howe, a veteran of the Greek Revolution (in which Byron, his hero, had died), a Christian reformer, and, later on, a financial backer of the abolitionist kamikaze John Brown and the husband of the author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." In 1837, when he went to New Hampshire to find Bridgman and bring her back to Boston, Howe had just been appointed director of the new Perkins Institution for the Blind. He had been on the lookout for a student who was both blind and deaf, and when he heard about Laura, through a professor at the Dartmouth Medical School, he was quick to recruit her. Her parents, unable to educate her, were happy to see their daughter taken off to Boston under the care of the dashing and high-minded Dr. Howe. For six years, Howe made Bridgman the poster child of his efforts to reform the education of blind children in the United States, and she proved an exceptional student. No deaf and blind person had ever been taught to read and to "speak" before, and she was regularly exhibited to audiences of potential donors to Perkins, before whom she displayed her remarkable ac-

Laura Bridgman, in 1850, reading one of the raised-letter books her teacher devised.

complishments, among them the ability to recognize, by the touch of the hand, people she had not "seen" in many months. By 1842, after Charles Dickens devoted a long chapter to her acquirements in "American Notes" (he ranked her, with Niagara Falls, as one of the two most impressive phenomena he had witnessed on his trip to the United States), Bridgman was an international celebrity. Little girls poked out the eyes of their dolls and named them Laura. Howe was a celebrity, too. Their names, like those of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan sixty years later, became inextricably joined.

By some strange (and, to the authors, possibly unwelcome) serendipity, two books about Bridgman and Howe have just appeared. Ernest Freeberg's "The Education of Laura Bridgman: First Deaf and Blind Person to Learn Language" (Harvard; $27.95) puts the emphasis on Howe and his ideas; Elisabeth Gitter's "The Imprisoned Guest: Samuel Howe and Laura Bridgman, the Original Deaf-Blind Girl" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $26) is closer to a biography of Bridgman. Both books are discriminating without being anachronistically judgmental. Gitter's writing is more dramatic and speculative (she is an English professor: speculation is something English professors are good at), and her book is not only informative but affecting. What a reader wants, after all, is to gain some feeling of what it might have been like to be Laura Bridgman. Probably no sighted and hearing person can ever accurately convey that feeling, but Gitter gets us in what seems the right neighborhood.

As both books reveal, Howe was, in some respects, a vain and peremptory man, and he was no philosopher. He was handsome and combative, and he knew how to raise money; he might easily have enjoyed a great career in business or politics. But it accorded with his sense of self-importance, in prewar Brahmin Boston, to devote himself almost fanatically to doing good, and although many of his educational techniques now seem not only wrongheaded but inhumane (he sometimes disciplined blind children by handcuffing them), he was an inspired teacher. For he did devise a method for teaching an eight-year-old blind and deaf girl how to communicate with other people.

Howe was not a believer in Sign, the language for deaf people which had already been developed in France and was being championed by Thomas Gallaudet, the director of the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, in Hartford, Connecticut. Howe thought that Sign was just a primitive kind of pantomime, and, in the beginning, a central tenet of his theory of education was that blind children should be taught as much as possible in the manner in which sighted children are taught, and this meant teaching them the English-language alphabet. He therefore printed books with raised letters (the volumes were enormous), which his students learned to read with their fingers. In Laura's case, of course, he couldn't tell her what the words she was feeling with her fingers meant. So he began by placing the raised letters that make up words like "key" and "spoon" next to the objects they refer to, and laboriously moving Laura's fingers from the word to the object and back again.

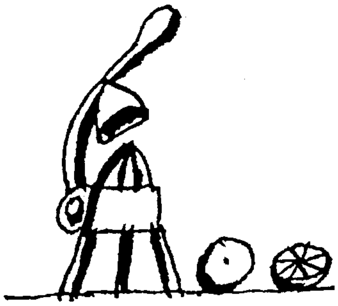
In reports that Howe wrote later, there was a eureka moment. At first, he wrote,

> it was as though she were under water, and we [her teachers] on the surface over her, unable to see her, but dropping a line, and moving it about here and there, hoping it might touch her hand, so that she would grasp it instinctively.

Then, after months of fishing, Laura bit. She suddenly got language:

> Her countenance lighted up with human expression; it was no longer a dog or parrot,—it was an immortal spirit, eagerly seizing upon a new link of union with other spirits! I could almost fix upon the moment when this truth dawned upon her mind, and spread its light to her countenance. I saw that the great obstacle was overcome.

Freeberg is skeptical of this epiphanic account—he thinks the process was much more arduous and gradual—and he and Gitter are both dubious of Howe's assumption that Laura retained no residual understanding of language from her early childhood. It seems likely, as Gitter suggests, that her brain had at least been imprinted with a capacity for grammar before she came down with scarlet fever. She was, eventually, comfortable using the subjunctive, the conditional, plurals, conceptual terms, and a number of other linguistic forms that are extremely unusual among deaf and blind people who had no exposure to language. But the notion that he had turned Laura on to language, like flipping a switch, was crucial to Howe's larger agenda.



That agenda was a characteristically Victorian conflation of science and spirituality, a kind of materialist "proof" of divine design, like natural theology. The scientific and materialist component was phrenology: the belief that minds come equipped with certain "faculties" (twenty-seven of them, according to the founder of phrenology, Franz Josef Gall), such as veneration, acquisitiveness, secretiveness, hope, combativeness, linguistic perception, form conception, size conception, and so on. These mental faculties (this is the materialist side of the theory) are manifested by physical bumps on the skull, so that religious persons have larger veneration bumps than skeptics, bullies have larger combativeness bumps than sissies, and so forth. What is more (and this is probably the source of the theory's appeal to the Victorian mind: the fussy-orderliness element), the bumps are arranged hierarchically, so that the basic faculties of perception (the ability to perceive form or space or causality, for example) are lower down in the brain (and the bumps are lower down on the head), and the higher faculties, such as veneration and benevolence, are on the top. Howe's faith in phrenological science was so great that he seems to have decided to marry, at the age of forty-two, because a phrenologist friend told him that he possessed a large affection bump and it would be bad for his health not to find an object on which to exercise it. (Julia Ward, as it turned out, was the wrong object: she was much too independent-minded for the upright and chauvinistic Dr. Howe, and the marriage was deeply unhappy. According to Gitter, Julia regularly kicked her husband out of bed—which sort of knocks a hole in the faculty-of-affection theory. It's not how big your bump is, apparently, but what you do with it that counts.)

This all sounds materialist and determinist enough, but phrenology was used to make an anti-materialist point. It was taken up by Howe and his fellow-enthusiasts to refute what they regarded as a truly materialist and determinist account of the mind, the account provided in the philosophy of John Locke. In the Lockean theory of knowledge, minds come equipped with no contents at all. They are, in the famous phrase, tabulae rasae—blank slates. Everything we think and know comes through the senses; nothing is innate. Locke was a religious man, but to many people his theory seemed to turn human beings from God's special creatures into fancy versions of the brutes, from conscious moral agents into the toys of matter. A theory, like phrenology, that argued, with scientific evidence, that mental contents are innate was a theory consistent with the belief in a divine creator. God, not the environment, gave us our characters.

It is easy to understand why a deaf and blind girl was the ideal experimental subject for a man like Howe. If he could show that her faculties developed with only minimal sensory input, she might serve as a standing refutation of Lockean materialism. She might establish the existence of the soul. "The immortal spirit within her, although in darkness & stillness like that of a tomb," Howe wrote at the very beginning of his work with Laura, "is full of life & vigor, is animated by innate power & triumphantly refutes the doctrine that the soul is but a blank sheet upon which education & experience write everything." This is why Howe insisted on representing Laura's acquisition of language as an almost spontaneous event: he wanted to be able to claim that he had simply activated her latent language faculty.

"Oh, here's something: 'Average heterosexual couple with a strong desire to stay home and get to sleep early seeking same.'"

• •

In the end, Howe's loyalty to phrenology was his experiment's undoing. Since the bumps associated with spirituality are at the top of the head, Howe was careful to prevent Laura from receiving any information about religion until he felt that she was ready for it. He wanted, when the time came, to demonstrate in the case of religious feeling what he believed he had demonstrated in the case of language—that the love of God, like linguistic competence, is innate. His plan was to introduce his pupil to the subject in a way analogous to the procedure he had used with words. He would place before her evidence of nature's beauty and design—showing her, for example, how plants grow from seeds—with the expectation that one day the switch would be flipped, and she would spontaneously intuit the existence of a divine First Cause.

Keeping information about religion from Laura turned out to be very hard to do. For one thing, she was an incessantly curious person. She wore out her teachers with questions. Why do flies not have names, like boys and girls do? Is the worm afraid when the hen eats him? Why do cows have two horns? To push two cows? Why can't we sail to the sun "in boats"? "If I eat fish hooks, could I be dead?" And on and on. She had a strict regimen of schoolwork, but what she really wanted to do was sit and spell questions into her teacher's hand hour after hour. There is not much doubt that this inextinguishable curiosity is what inspired her to master reading and writing well beyond the limits of necessity. It is possibly even what kept her alive. (When she was unhappy, she starved herself.) But she was a compulsively fastidious person generally—"birdlike" seems to have been a common description. She was particular about her clothes; she cleaned her room meticulously; at one point, she requested a mirror. A psychologist who observed her late in her life, G. Stanley Hall, thought that there was something pathological about her curiosity; and Gitter suggests that Laura may have developed, as a consequence of the scarlet fever, a condition of obsessive compulsion known as pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococci. The notion that Laura was (beyond her obvious sensory deprivation) medically exceptional was, of course, a notion Howe wished to avoid.

Another reason that Howe wanted to postpone Laura's religious instruction had to do with his Unitarianism. He regarded the Calvinist obsession with sin and sacrifice as a superstition, and he didn't want his prize pupil's head filled with gloomy fundamentalist dogma. Indeed, that the natural religious instinct is free of gloom and dogma is precisely what he hoped to show. But in 1843, when Laura was thirteen, Howe got married, and he and Julia went to Europe, where they stayed for more than a year. He left Laura in the care of Mary Swift, a teacher who did not share his liberal religious views, and, under the relentless pressure of Laura's curiosity, Swift allowed her student to be introduced to old-style religion. Laura wrote long letters to Howe asking him about God, but his answers were brief and evasive. By the time he returned from Europe, the damage was done. "I hardly recognized the Laura I had known," he later complained. And he was quick, in his imperious manner, to declare her education a failure. He began to withdraw from her, and to withdraw as well from his earlier insistence that blind children are capable of leading normal lives. By 1848, he was declaring that "the blind as a class, are inferior to other persons in mental power and ability." In a weird reversion to a kind of Calvinist fatalism, he now claimed that disability was an inherited punishment for the vice of the parents, and that blind children were better off left in the care of their families. The failure of Laura Bridgman's religious education, he later said, was the greatest disappointment of his life.

Laura spent her days almost continually in the presence of another person, usually a young woman assigned to be her tutor and companion. She naturally developed deep and affectionate attachments to these people, as she did to "Doctor," as she called Howe. When they went away, to marry or to take another job, she was crushed. She begged to go with them, sometimes offering to serve as a housemaid, and her fantasies of how she would minister to her friends are heartbreaking. She imagined herself, she once wrote, with half a dozen wings along her back:

> My legs would be so powerful to leap a great distance as well as the kangaroo. My arms could be of much utility. . . . I wish so much to run of my accord as swiftly as my strength will allow me. I could visit all of my good friends. . . . I should carry many little things to them for Miss Wight [her favorite teacher] & our friends with great pleasure.

As Laura grew older, though, her companions drifted away, and Howe was reluctant to commit the funds needed to find new ones. She was too old to be educated any longer; the experiment was finished. She began regularly visiting her family in New Hampshire. In 1862, when she was thirty-two, she was baptized, by immersion, in a brook near her parents' house, and she became a pious evangelical Christian. She lived another twenty-seven years, still famous but no longer a phenomenon. She commuted between the Perkins Institution and Hanover. She became close to one of her sisters, but the sister died, and in the last years of her life she had no true intimate companions. Outsiders found her odd and unappealing. Much of her talk was about Christ and Heaven ("a good place that God knew that I could not fall off the edge of the floor," she had once described it). She wrote poetry ("A good sleep is a white curtain / A bad sleep is a black curtain"), knitted and crocheted. In 1888, she was introduced to the young Helen Keller, who annoyed her by stepping on her foot. A year later, she died. The last word she spelled was "mother."

Laura Bridgman received her education in an era when no distinction was generally made between psychology and moral philosophy. It seemed obvious that science would confirm conclusions that had already been reached by abstract reasoning or handed down by Scripture—for example, that the ability to feel veneration is a "higher" attribute than the ability to perceive three-dimensional space. Phrenology was a particularly crude instance of this tendency, and it was derided by some scientists even in its own time. But Franz Josef Gall was a distinguished neurologist, and he did not think that speculation about the moral order of the universe was beyond his ken as a scientist. Quite the contrary.

By the end of Bridgman's life, this had changed. The two fields split apart, and psychology became a laboratory science. Psychologists studied reaction times and sensory thresholds; they eschewed metaphysical questions. G. Stanley Hall, the man who diagnosed Bridgman's curiosity as a form of mania, was one of the first of these New Psychologists (as experimental psychologists were known) in the United States. The tone of his account of Bridgman's personality, published in *Mind* (a leading journal of the New Psychology) in 1879, is clinical, unsentimental, and free of ostentatious moralizing—in almost every way the opposite of Howe's reports on Bridgman forty years earlier. As Freeberg nicely puts it, "Laura Bridgman's sense of balance became far more interesting than her sense of right and wrong."

But it is not so easy to keep philosophical questions out of psychology. Every account of the way the mind works seems to imply some theory of conduct, or some belief about what is important in life. This was certainly the view of the man who was Hall's teacher, and the first New Psychologist in the United States, William James. In 1904, James reviewed a biography of Bridgman written by two of Howe's daughters. The case presented many opportunities for psychological conjecture, he wrote, but "what is not conjecture, but fact, is the philosophical conclusion which we are forced to draw." By the standards of most people, James wrote, Bridgman's inner world was almost unimaginably impoverished and underpopulated. Her mental contents were restricted to tactile memories of the small number of things she could touch with her fingers, and to what James called "the pallidest verbal substitutes"—that is, written words. Yet she found life as intensely absorbing as anyone else does. What this showed, James thought, was that the relations among things are far more interesting and important than the things themselves. "All sorts of terms can transport the mind with equal delight, provided they be woven into equally massive and far-reaching schemes and systems of relationship," he wrote. "The schemes and the systems," and not the pieces of information themselves, "are what the mind finds interesting."

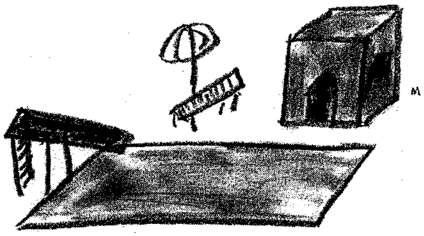
This was a philosophical conclusion that suited James because it supported his view that there are many "realities" in the universe, each depending on where you start and what your material is, and that we sense relations as much as we sense things—that there is "a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*," as he once wrote. But his remark also seems to echo Bridgman's own insistence that she had a fourth sense, the sense of "think." Thinking is an instinct as immediate and spontaneous as sight or touch: we can't stop doing it. It's the way we weave the sensuous tapestry of the world. From a cosmic point of view, all minds are pathetically underpopulated. We somehow intuit a world from a tiny sample of what is out there—not as tiny as Laura Bridgman's but possibly not as great as we would like to imagine, either. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Thinks . . . , *by David Lodge (Viking; $24.95).* There is something comforting about any Lodge novel: although the characters sometimes behave despicably, they remain under careful supervision, and the pages take on a sort of witty murmur. At a grim and insular provincial university, Ralph, a married scientist who runs an artificial-intelligence program, is drawn to the newly arrived Helen, a novelist and a recent widow. In Lodgian fashion, adultery quickly becomes their chief preoccupation, as the narrative unfolds in shifting points of view (Ralph dictating into a tape recorder, Helen adding to a diary), with occasional third-person authorial assistance. It is Lodge's gift to make one care about the outcome, even if, this time around, the characters are not much to care about.

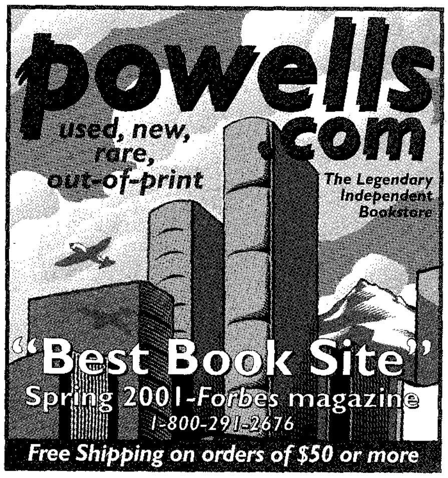
The Love-Artist, *by Jane Alison (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23).* Part thriller, part fantasy, this richly imagined first novel offers an answer to an antique conundrum: why was Ovid banished from Rome to languish on the western edge of the Black Sea, and how is it that only fragments of his "Medea" survive? The disastrous love affair that Alison invents between Ovid and Xenia, an almost feral witch whom he first spies rising like Galatea from the waves, has the power of poetic truth, and the novel's depiction of the circumscribed lives of women in ancient Rome—from old Persilla, Ovid's housekeeper, to Julia, the maddened granddaughter of the Emperor Augustus—is especially fine.

The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio, *by Terry Ryan (Simon & Schuster; $24).* The author's mother, Evelyn Ryan, was a small-town Ohio housewife in the nineteen-fifties who lived on the brink of dire poverty, thanks to a brood of ten kids and an ineffectual drunk of a husband. Since Evelyn couldn't work outside her home, she worked inside it, penning hundreds of product jingles and entering them in the national contests that drove the advertising industry of the day. And she didn't just enter contests—she won them, receiving several major appliances, innumerable small checks, and a handful of grand prizes ranging from a sports car to an international vacation. This plucky Middle American chronicle, starring an unsinkable, relentlessly resourceful mother and her Madison Avenue-style magic, succeeds on many levels—as a tale of family spirit triumphing over penury, as a history of mid-century American consumerism, and as a memoir about a woman who was both ahead of her time and unable to escape it.



Year of the Fires, *by Stephen J. Pyne (Viking; $25.95).* The terrible wildfires of 1910 in the Rocky Mountains determined forestry doctrine for most of the twentieth century. Pyne, a history professor who fought forest fires for fifteen summers, writes like a master. His account is full of thrills, scares, and heroics, but it is not simply a popular adventure story. Pyne demonstrates the ways that the political process decides ecological policy, determining not only what is done but by whom, and for how much money.

The Piano Shop on the Left Bank, *by Thad Carhart (Random House; $23.95).* When Carhart, an American living in Paris, decides to buy a used piano, he meets Luc, a modest local piano dealer and repairman, who not only sells him one but becomes something of a mentor. As the author's passion for playing is reawakened, he falls in love with the instrument itself: its history, the rigor and idiosyncrasies of piano design and tuning, the unique feel and sound that attend each individual model. Carhart writes with a sensuousness enhanced by patience and grounded by the humble acquisition of new insights into music, his childhood, and his relationship to the city of Paris.


powells.com
used, new, rare, out-of-print
The Legendary Independent Bookstore
"Best Book Site"
Spring 2001-Forbes magazine
1-800-291-2676
Free Shipping on orders of $50 or more

Dai Bosatsu Zendo·Kongo-ji
A Zen Monastery in New York's Catskill Mountains
Introduction to Zen

(845) 439-4566
daibosatsu.org
Friday–Sunday July 20–22, 2001

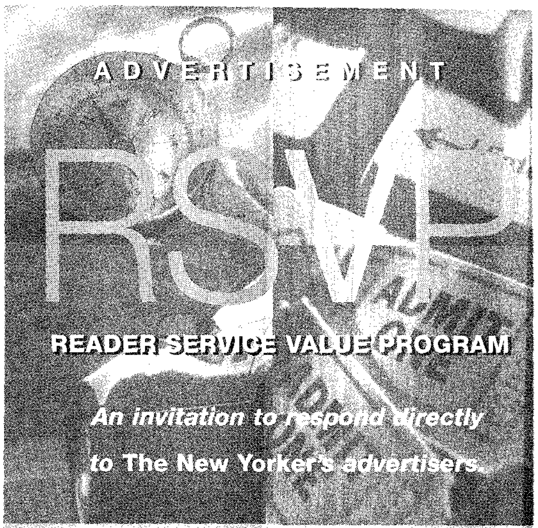
Stone Soup
The Literary
Magazine by Children
A perfect gift to inspire creativity
$33/yr (6 issues) · 800-447-4569
stories · poems · art · ages 8–13
www.stonesoup.com

Black & White
Documentary Photography
of
Your Family
WWW.A-DAY-IN-OUR-LIFE.COM
617-413-1224

You Write.
We'll Dig.
www.factsforfiction.com

SeaCoast HOMES & VILLAS
Vacation Rentals made *easy*.
HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC
800.654.7101
www.seacoasthv.com

6 Million Pieces!
China, Crystal, Silver, Collectibles
125,000 Patterns • Old/New • Buy/Sell
REPLACEMENTS, LTD.
1-800-REPLACE (1-800-737-5223)
PO Box 26029, Greensboro, NC 27420 • Dept YO
www.replacements.com


ADVERTISEMENT
RSVP
READER SERVICE VALUE PROGRAM
An invitation to respond directly to The New Yorker's advertisers.

ANNOUNCEMENT

SOTHEBY'S SUMMER CONCERT SERIES brings you the Tom Grant Duo on July 11th and Brad Mehldau on July 25th. Doors open at 7:00 and concerts begin at 8:00. Tickets are $35.00 each. For ticket sales, please call 1-212-606-7173.

APPAREL & ACCESSORIES

LANDS' END®. Oxfords, chinos, and dozens more of America's best-built, best-priced classics, available 24 hours a day. Call 1-800-489-9078 for a free catalog or click on to www.landsend.com.

ORB SILVERSMITHS. A dazzling array of silver and gold jewelry from simple petite charms to family crest rings and complicated eight-band puzzle rings. For more information, call 1-800-862-2196 or visit www.orbsilversmiths.com.

AUTOMOTIVE

JEEP. For more information on the legendary Jeep vehicles, visit our Web site at www.jeep.com.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

CITICORP. For more information about Citi Card, call 1-888-CITI-CARD or visit www.citi.com.

FURNISHINGS & ACCESSORIES

SILVER FUND is the world's largest dealer in old Georg Jensen silver flatware, jewelry, and holloware with a 50,000 piece inventory at significant savings. Visit our Web site at www.thesilverfund.com or call toll free 1-877-224-5230.

HEALTH CARE

GREEN MOUNTAIN AT FOX RUN. Since 1973, offering women practical strategies for achieving long-term weight loss and improved health through lifestyle change. Professionally staffed. Call 1-800-448-8106 or visit our Web site at www.fitwoman.com.

LANDSCAPING

RIVEREDGE FARMS. The Return of the American Elm. Plant a piece of history for only $39.95 (plus S & H). To order, please visit www.americanelm.com or call Riveredge Farms at 1-888-680-1922.

TRAVEL

THE CELTIC TRAVELER. Unique access to the culture of "old Ireland." History, archeology, music, folklore, natural history, literature, and good fellowship. Small groups. Educator led. For more information, call 1-800-399-3473 or visit www.celtictraveler.com.

SONESTA HOTELS, RESORTS, AND NILE CRUISES. A collection of fine hotels and resorts unlike any other. Each promising a rich yet profoundly different experience tied distinctly to its destination. Boston, Miami, New Orleans, Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, Egypt, Peru, Tuscany. For more information, please call 1-800-SONESTA or visit us on-line at www.sonesta.com.

TAYSIDE AND THAMES. Charming country house hotels. Scotland, English lakes, Cotswolds, Wales, plus The Stafford, London. The company will help you with reservations and do customized itineraries. Call 1-201-236-0555, or toll free 1-866-965-0555 or visit our Web site at www.taysideandthames.com.

For more information, log on to www.newyorker.com and click on The New Yorker Reader Link.

IF UNABLE TO REACH TELEPHONE LISTINGS, SEND REQUESTS, WITH ISSUE DATE NOTED, TO THE NEW YORKER READER SERVICES, 4 TIMES SQUARE, 21ST FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10036.

010702

© 2001 The Condé Nast Publications Inc. All Rights Reserved.

THE CURRENT CINEMA

FACE/OFF

Steven Spielberg meets Stanley Kubrick.

BY DAVID DENBY

Early in Steven Spielberg's "A.I.," the face of a perfectly normal-looking woman slowly lifts off, moving outward from her head like the hatch of a spaceship. A minute later, the face falls back into place, and the creature—a robot, with clockwork brains—looks like a fleshy woman once again. We've seen face-lifts like this before, but it's still a shock—initially almost a mutilation, and then, once we've recovered, a sight as strange and beautiful as a painting by Magritte or Dali. In "A.I.," the many uncanny exchanges between the human and the post-human are brought off with seamless perfection, and Spielberg's imagery (Janusz Kaminski did the cinematography) is precise and unforced and at times hauntingly lovely. Spielberg still moves people through space better than anyone else; he uses blinding white light against dark backgrounds like a magician bringing revelation itself; he creates eccentric, mysteriously sad visual motifs—for instance, a robot abandoned at the bottom of a swimming pool, as forlorn as a party hat left on a subway bench. As a director of fantasy, Spielberg puts to shame the hacks who turn out foul-looking messes like "The Mummy Returns" and "Tomb Raider," with their ugly brown sets built to be blown up, their creatures that fall apart like weak piñatas. Whatever is wrong with "A.I."—and a great deal is wrong—it's the first American movie of the year made by an artist.

"A.I.: Artificial Intelligence" is set in a doom-ridden future: global warming has melted the polar ice cap; coastal cities, including New York, have gurgled and gone under; millions are dead, and a reduced worldwide population depends, with increasing disgust, on robots for work and pleasure. The idea for the movie has been around a long time—maybe too long. "A.I." is based on a Brian Aldiss story that was published in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1969 and was later worked into a screen story by Ian Watson. For years, Stanley Kubrick, in his lordly-dithering way, labored and fussed over the material. In the end, he turned to "Eyes Wide Shut," but not before talking at length to Spielberg about "A.I." and suggesting that he direct it. In the generally cynical environment of big-time Hollywood, Spielberg's assumption of the project after Kubrick's death has a stirring resonance to it, and I wish I could say that the semi-posthumous collaboration comes off. Of course, one can't be absolutely sure who is responsible for what, but if you were wondering how Spielberg's pop exaltations would consort with Kubrick's dread and metaphysical dismay, the answer is: strangely, confusingly.

"Close Encounters of the Third Kind" and "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" both opened with a bang, but this time Spielberg, who wrote the script himself, begins with a lugubrious double introduction. Ben Kingsley, offscreen, intones news of the ice-cap disaster in Noble English—the orotund diction of bad movies for more than half a century. Then there's a stiffly written and played science seminar led by William Hurt, a gray man standing among gray listeners. Hurt says something about the need for a new robot, a robot that can be imprinted with a desire to love and dream. Stepping out of a column of light like E.T., Haley Joel Osment is the paragon—a child robot called David, a boy who never throws food, or pees on the toilet seat, or squashes bugs. Haley Joel,

The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for six combined issues: Feb. 19 & 26, Apr. 23 & 30, June 18 & 25, Aug. 20 & 27, Oct. 15 & 22, Dec. 24 & 31) by The Condé Nast Publications Inc. (4 Times Square, N.Y., N.Y. 10036), which is a subsidiary of Advance Publications, Inc. Vol. LXXVII, No. 17, July 2, 2001. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office.

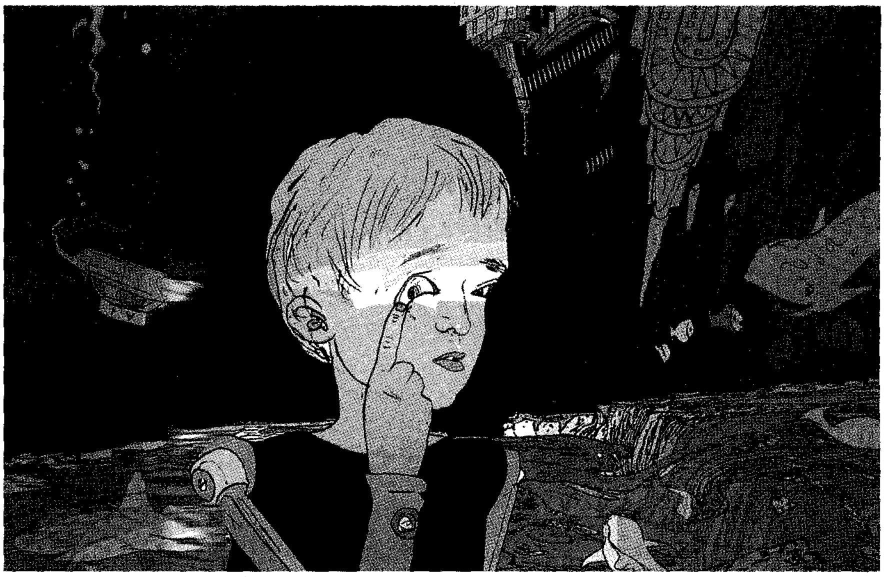
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, CO 80328-6447. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

the extraordinary young actor from "The Sixth Sense," is given a slightly plasticized look by the makeup artists—his cheeks are rounded and shiny, his complexion is peachy. He stands very still and holds an unblinking stare and a small, expectant smile. "Would you like me to go to bed now?" he asks. Programmed to love, his David is terribly sweet, and yet his adoptive parents, Monica (Frances O'Connor) and Henry Swinton (Sam Robards), are unnerved by him—especially after their real son, Martin, who has been cryogenically preserved while a cure was sought for a disease that he contracted, suddenly recovers and comes home. Jealous and vindictive, Martin, a human devil-child, tries to destroy David, and Spielberg works up some horror-film tension. But these sequences aren't very enjoyable. As a couple, the Swintons are intentionally unappealing—Monica, in particular, is wild-eyed and neurotic, a lousy mother to both boys. The Swintons' house is a futuristic art thing, circular, with tiny mobiles hanging everywhere, and Spielberg and Kaminski, in a rare mistake, light it in diffused pale-blue tones that put one into a trance of boredom.

Scared of David, Monica turns him loose in the forest. At that point, the movie should take off as a fairy tale about an unwanted child. David, now an outcast, falls among the robots, including Joe (Jude Law), a stud-gigolo who makes love to lonely women. Jude Law's hair is shaped into a black plastic wedge, and his cheekbones and chin are molded for glamour; he's more beautiful than any human, that's for sure. Frisky in a high-gloss black coat, he dances his way through the part, a candid and utterly charming machine. When Law is around, the movie is magical. But there's a darker purpose afoot: the robots are *all* outcasts. The humans hate them and perecute them as thoroughly as the Nazis persecuted the Jews, rounding them up and bashing them at obscene revels called Flesh Fairs. Spielberg stages one of these events as a cross between a rock oncert gone mad and a freaky W.W.F. brawl; the assembled crowd, roaring and ursing, seems like a fascist mob.

One senses a perverse Kubrickian oke here: the humans are neurotic, franic, and empty, the machines refined and good-natured. And Spielberg fills out the joke: politely, without jostling, the robots search through a junk pile, picking up a spare chin or a set of teeth or an arm. The scene is grotesque yet gentle, in beatific-surreal style. At the Flesh Fair, the distinguished robots go to their deaths with smiles of resignation. All this is haunting, but what does it mean? What's the point of the anti-populism embodied in the portrait of the human mob? We're meant to be outraged by the cruelty, yet is it crazy for humans to feel threatened by the machines that are literally replacing them? What's being satirized or criticized—human fear? The inferiority of the humans is a dead-end irony that doesn't work dramatically. One suspects that it's merely the latest aspect of Kubrick's misanthropy, which took over his movies as early as "2001: A Space Odyssey." In that film, the computer HAL was far more human than the humans. For thirty years, in such zombified works as "Barry Lyndon" and "Eyes Wide Shut," Kubrick had little use for men and women. Operating from the far side of the grave in "A.I.," he's running his own kind of Flesh Fair.

Spielberg, of course, has the opposite temperament: he likes warmth and sentiment in his pictures. In the past, children have been the perfect vehicle for his emotion, but in "A.I.," with a brilliant child actor on hand, he loses his common sense and milks the kid to death. David just loves that awful mother and through all his adventures longs to be a real little boy so she will love him back. The story is based explicitly on "Pinocchio," but it gives us a queasy feeling from the beginning. Have the filmmakers forgotten that Pinocchio is a scamp? He's disobedient and lazy, he lies, he has a nose that rather famously gets longer. Pinocchio wants to be a real person because he's tired of being knocked around as a puppet. He is redeemed by love for his wood-carver "father" just at the very end of the tale. But in "A.I." David is not only the ultimate goody-goody; he's the spirit of pure, yearning adoration. That's his sole dimension—he's a robot—and in the end Haley Joel, great as he is, tries our patience. The movie weirdly pours treacle over a foundation of despair, and any genuine emotion drops out of it.

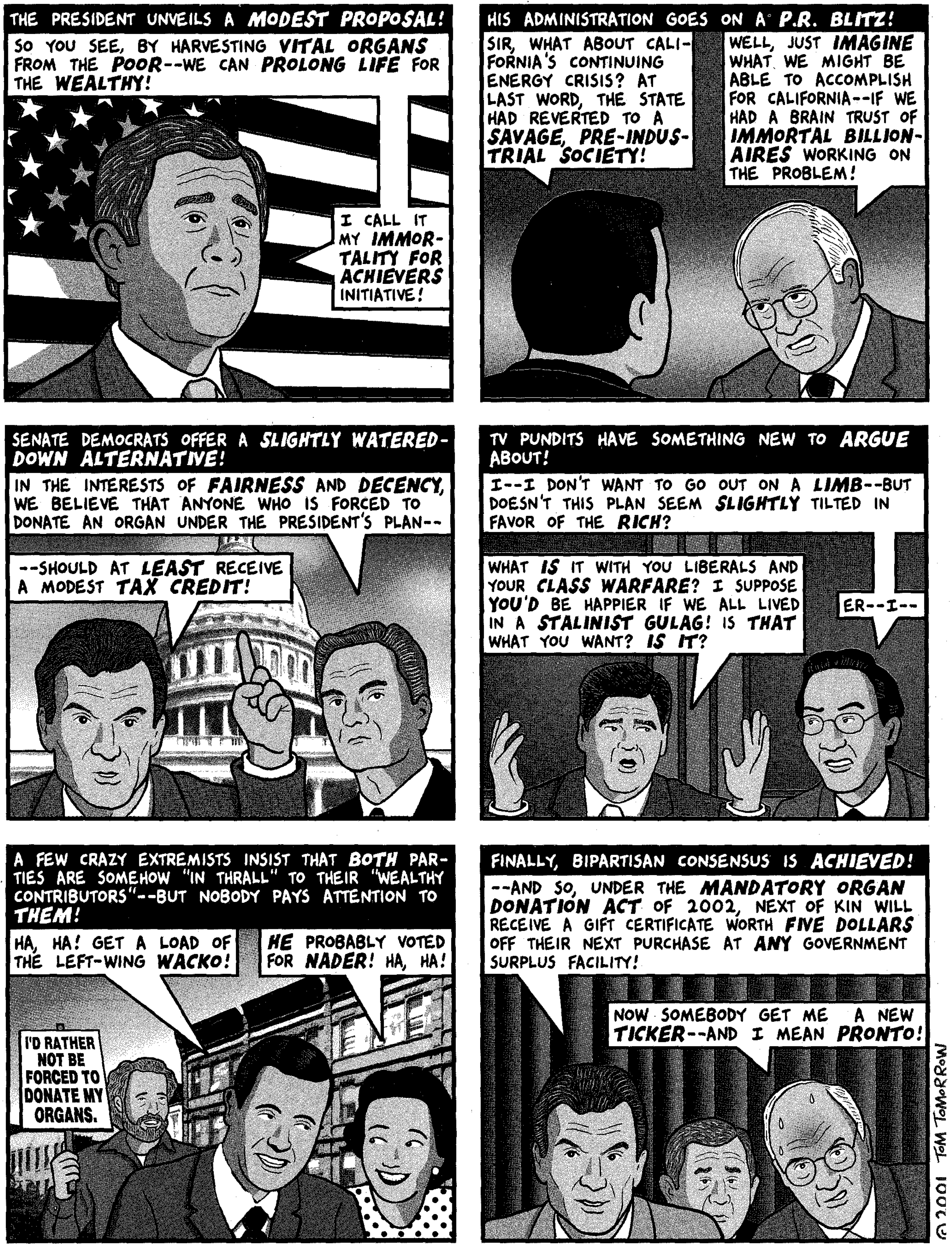


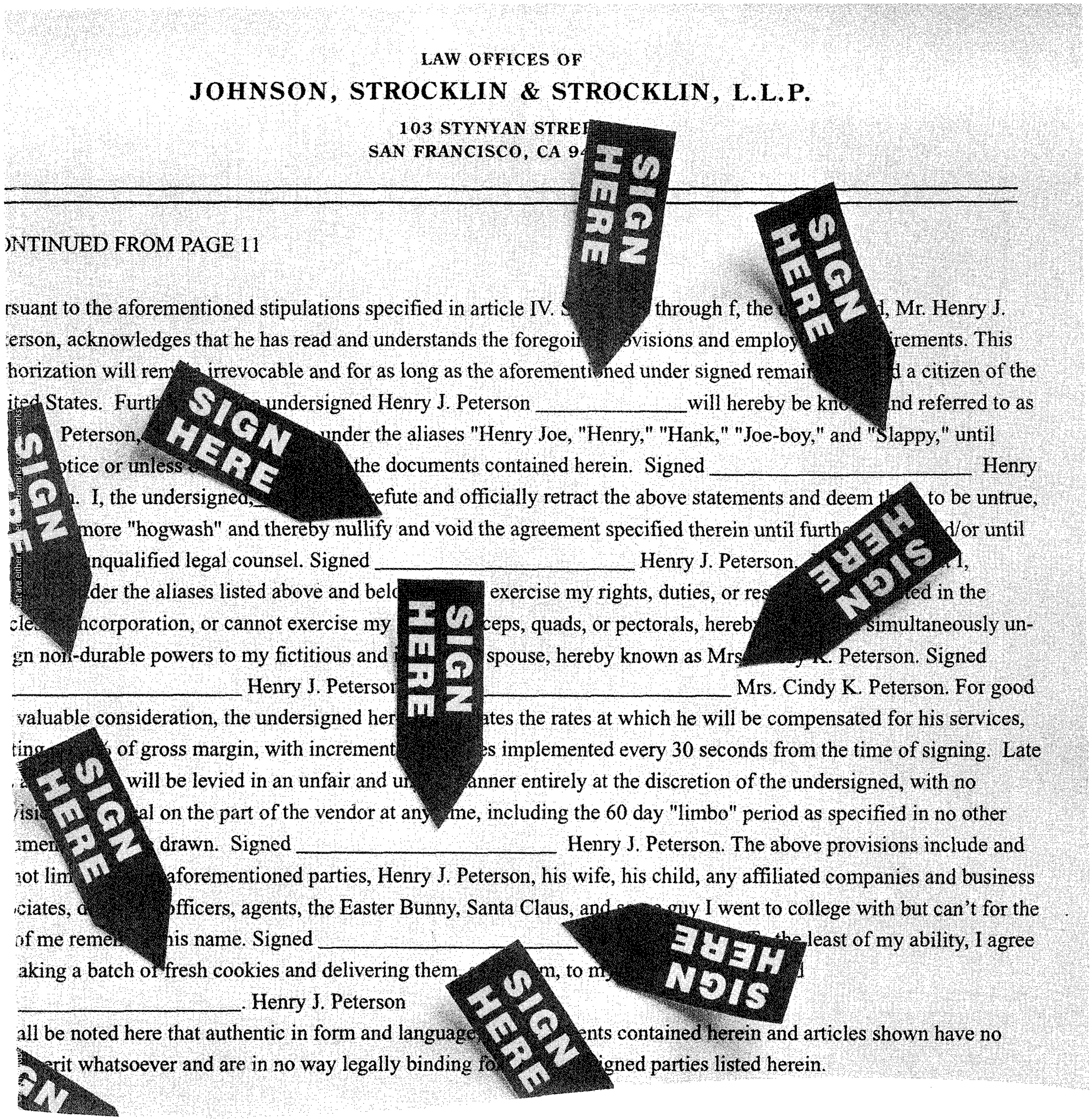
Haley Joel Osment is a child robot who wants to be a real boy, in Spielberg's "A.I."

"A.I." might have worked if it had been faster and lighter, with perhaps only glancing moments of misery. But this is a ponderous, death-of-the-world fantasy, which leaves us with nothing but an Oedipal robot—hardly a redemption. At the end, still awaiting his transformation, David winds up underwater in drowned New York. Eventually, some willowy extraterrestrials show up, and we hear Ben Kingsley completing the orotund explanations of the opening scene. The bluish imagery attains a religioso quality, yet no humans are left to greet the future. That Kubrick gave up on the human race will not come as a surprise, but Spielberg is a different story. "A.I." has every kind of special effect in it but this one: a deceased director rises from the crypt and drains the vitality out of a living one. ♦

THE BACK PAGE BY TOM TOMORROW

IMMORTALITY FOR ACHIEVERS


THE PRESIDENT UNVEILS A **MODEST PROPOSAL!**
SO YOU SEE, BY HARVESTING **VITAL ORGANS** FROM THE **POOR**--WE CAN **PROLONG LIFE** FOR THE **WEALTHY!**
I CALL IT MY **IMMORTALITY FOR ACHIEVERS** INITIATIVE!
HIS ADMINISTRATION GOES ON A **P.R. BLITZ!**
SIR, WHAT ABOUT CALIFORNIA'S CONTINUING ENERGY CRISIS? AT LAST WORD, THE STATE HAD REVERTED TO A **SAVAGE, PRE-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY!**
WELL, JUST **IMAGINE** WHAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH FOR CALIFORNIA--IF WE HAD A BRAIN TRUST OF **IMMORTAL BILLIONAIRES** WORKING ON THE PROBLEM!
SENATE DEMOCRATS OFFER A **SLIGHTLY WATERED-DOWN ALTERNATIVE!**
IN THE INTERESTS OF **FAIRNESS** AND **DECENCY**, WE BELIEVE THAT ANYONE WHO IS FORCED TO DONATE AN ORGAN UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN--
--SHOULD AT **LEAST** RECEIVE A MODEST **TAX CREDIT!**
TV PUNDITS HAVE SOMETHING NEW TO **ARGUE** ABOUT!
I--I DON'T WANT TO GO OUT ON A **LIMB**--BUT DOESN'T THIS PLAN SEEM **SLIGHTLY** TILTED IN FAVOR OF THE **RICH?**
WHAT **IS** IT WITH YOU LIBERALS AND YOUR **CLASS WARFARE?** I SUPPOSE **YOU'D** BE HAPPIER IF WE ALL LIVED IN A **STALINIST GULAG!** IS **THAT** WHAT YOU WANT? **IS IT?**
ER--I--
A FEW CRAZY EXTREMISTS INSIST THAT **BOTH** PARTIES ARE SOMEHOW "IN THRALL" TO THEIR "WEALTHY CONTRIBUTORS"--BUT NOBODY PAYS ATTENTION TO **THEM!**
HA, HA! GET A LOAD OF THE LEFT-WING **WACKO!**
HE PROBABLY VOTED FOR **NADER!** HA, HA!
I'D RATHER NOT BE FORCED TO DONATE MY ORGANS.
FINALLY, BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS IS **ACHIEVED!**
--AND SO, UNDER THE **MANDATORY ORGAN DONATION ACT** OF 2002, NEXT OF KIN WILL RECEIVE A GIFT CERTIFICATE WORTH **FIVE DOLLARS** OFF THEIR NEXT PURCHASE AT **ANY** GOVERNMENT SURPLUS FACILITY!
NOW SOMEBODY GET ME A NEW **TICKER**--AND I MEAN **PRONTO!**
© 2001 TOM TOMORROW



LAW OFFICES OF
JOHNSON, STROCKLIN & STROCKLIN, L.L.P.
103 STYNYAN STREE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 9

NTINUED FROM PAGE 11

rsuant to the aforementioned stipulations specified in article IV. S through f, the d, Mr. Henry J. erson, acknowledges that he has read and understands the foregoi visions and employ irements. This horization will rem irrevocable and for as long as the aforementi ned under signed remai d a citizen of the ited States. Furth undersigned Henry J. Peterson _____________ will hereby be kn nd referred to as Peterson, under the aliases "Henry Joe, "Henry," "Hank," "Joe-boy," and "Slappy," until tice or unless the documents contained herein. Signed _______________________ Henry . I, the undersigned, efute and officially retract the above statements and deem t to be untrue, more "hogwash" and thereby nullify and void the agreement specified therein until furth d/or until nqualified legal counsel. Signed _______________________ Henry J. Peterson, l, der the aliases listed above and bel exercise my rights, duties, or res ed in the cle ncorporation, or cannot exercise my ceps, quads, or pectorals, hereb simultaneously un- gn non-durable powers to my fictitious and spouse, hereby known as Mrs K. Peterson. Signed _____________________ Henry J. Peterson _____________________ Mrs. Cindy K. Peterson. For good valuable consideration, the undersigned her ates the rates at which he will be compensated for his services, ting % of gross margin, with increment es implemented every 30 seconds from the time of signing. Late will be levied in an unfair and u anner entirely at the discretion of the undersigned, with no isi al on the part of the vendor at any me, including the 60 day "limbo" period as specified in no other me drawn. Signed _______________________ Henry J. Peterson. The above provisions include and ot lim aforementioned parties, Henry J. Peterson, his wife, his child, any affiliated companies and business ciates, o fficers, agents, the Easter Bunny, Santa Claus, and guy I went to college with but can't for the f me reme his name. Signed _______________________ the least of my ability, I agree aking a batch of fresh cookies and delivering them m, to m d _____________________. Henry J. Peterson

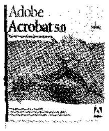
all be noted here that authentic in form and language ents contained herein and articles shown have no rit whatsoever and are in no way legally binding fo gned parties listed herein.

Or click here.

sign.pdf

Adobe Acrobat 5.0 makes digital signatures a reality in your company.

Bad news for the ballpoint pen: Adobe® Acrobat® 5.0 software lets you sign and approve your critical business documents digitally. Whether you need a signature from one person or twelve, Adobe Acrobat 5.0 software has digital signature capabilities that make approval easier. Simply convert your document to the universal Adobe PDF format, then e-mail or post it online. Your document can be viewed, signed digitally and quickly returned or routed to the next recipient. So you get the approvals you need right away — no walking around or waiting involved. What's more, Adobe Acrobat 5.0 software ensures that critical documents are secure by notifying users if documents are altered after signing. All told, it makes the paper and pen method seem rather archaic. Find out more at www.adobe.com/fullacrobat



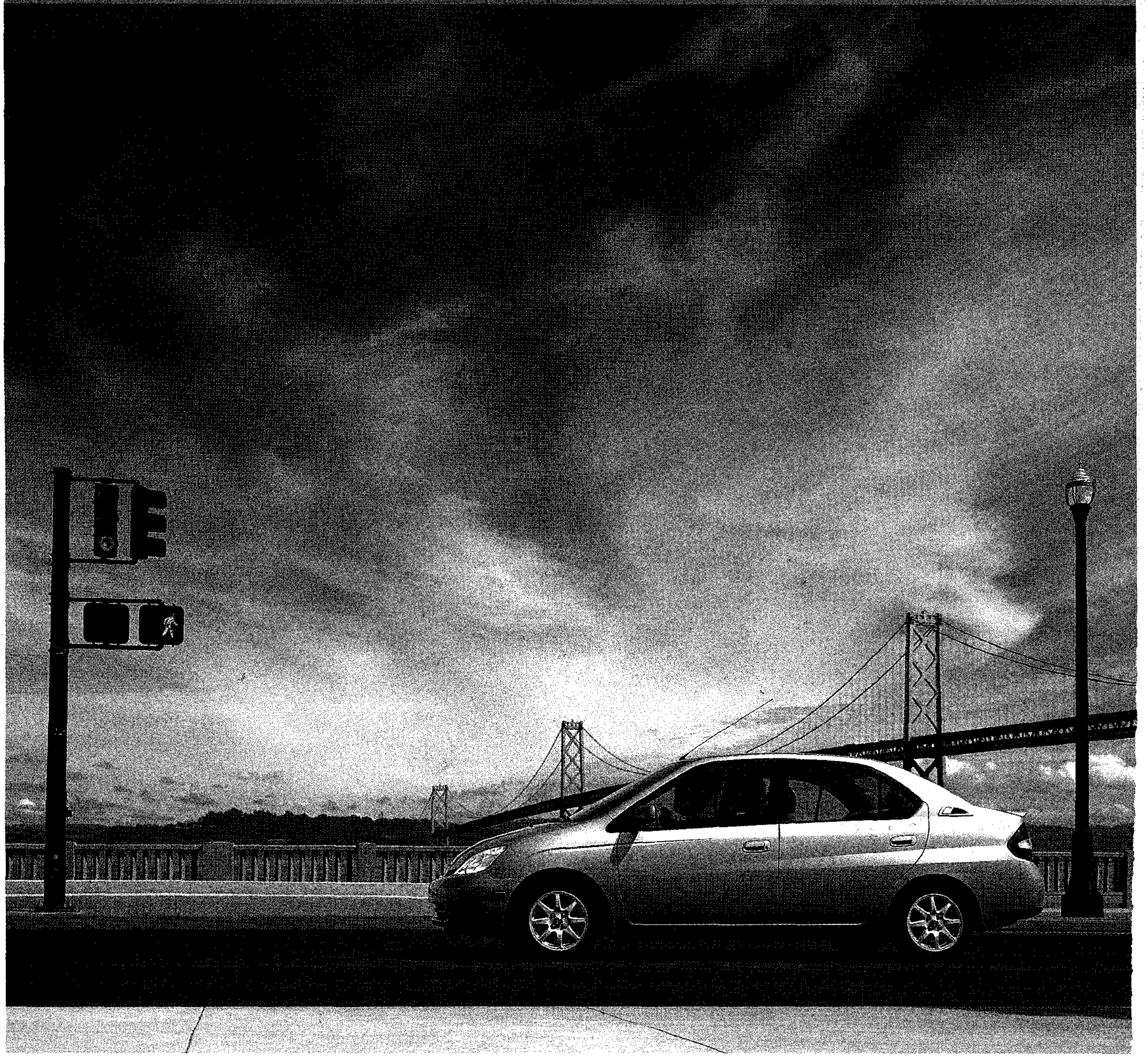
Adobe
everywhere
you look™

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TOYOTA HYBRID SYSTEM

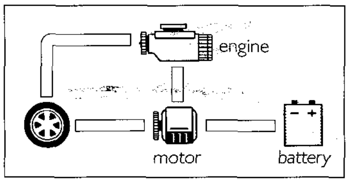
MPG 52/45 F E 566mi CO_2 1/2 NO_X 1/10

all figures based on EPA estimates — city/hwy mileage — actual results may vary — compared to conventional gasoline engines



Ever heard the sound a stoplight makes?

Introducing a breakthrough in automotive technology from Toyota. Prius, the world's first production car to combine a super-efficient gasoline engine with an electric motor that never needs to be plugged in. It seamlessly switches between gas, electric or a combination of both, instinctively choosing the most efficient way to drive the wheels. So, it's only natural that when the wheels stop, the engine stops: in clean, blissful silence. Prius. It's quietly revolutionizing the way the world drives.



When stoppe
Prius' engine
shuts down,
saving fuel an
reducing
exhaust fume

Starting at $19,995. Delivery, processing and handling fee $485. Total MSRP $20,480.*
Visit the new Prius at www.toyota.com/prius or call 800-GO-TOYOTA.

TOYOTA PRIUS | genius

---

*Based on manufacturer's suggested retail price. Excludes taxes, license, title and other optional or regionally required equipment. Actual dealer price may vary. ©2000 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., In